

# The Vision of the Last Judgment in the *Vita* of Saint Niphon (BHG 1371Z)

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## The *Vita*

Saint Niphon, according to his *vita* (hereafter *VNiph*), lived during the reign of Emperor Constantine I (2).<sup>1</sup> His father, Agapitos, was an archon of the army in a city called Almyropolis (3). Agapitos becomes friendly with Sabbatios, whom Constantine I has appointed as *stratelates* to the land adjacent to Almyropolis (2–3). Sabbatios suggests to Agapitos that the eight-year-old Niphon be sent to Constantinople for his education (4). In Constantinople Niphon stays with Sabbatios's wife and is taught by the family priest (7–8). For four years, Niphon advances in his studies and matures spiritually (9–15). The devil, alarmed at Niphon's progress, instills in him nostalgia for his parents (16). His hosts try to counter the depression by offering him lots of food and wine (17). This leads Niphon to a period of serious degeneracy (18–23), though he eventually repents and changes his ways (24–28). At this point, *VNiph* drops the chronological

narrative and instead recounts several of Niphon's dreams and visions, fights with demons, prayers, and didactic exchanges with disciples, including the author of *VNiph*, who in some manuscripts is called Peter, a hieromonk.<sup>2</sup> The author resumes a sequential narrative when he describes Niphon's last years. After a dream in which the apostle Paul informs Niphon that God has chosen him to become a bishop (141), the saint flees Constantinople, fearing that he may be forced to become archbishop of the city. He arrives in Alexandria (142), where he is miraculously chosen as bishop of the nearby city of Constantiane (143–44). Niphon, especially concerned with the salvation of his flock, becomes very popular until his death. At his deathbed appear several angelic powers, saints, and even Christ himself (157).

Sophronios Eustratiades and Lennart Rydén have pointed out several inconsistencies and anachronisms that make dating the *vita* to the fourth century impossible.<sup>3</sup> Eustratiades suggested that it was written in the eighth or ninth century on the basis of an earlier text. More convincingly, Rydén offered compelling evidence that dates the *vita*'s composition to the late

1 Greek text in A. Rystenko, ed., *Materiyaly z istorii vizantiis'kolov'yans'koi literaturi ta movi* (Odessa, 1928; repr. Leipzig, 1982), 3–186 (long recension), 187–238 (short recension). All references here are to the chapter divisions of the long recension in Rystenko. The short recension has also been edited by S. Eustratiades, “Ο ὁσιος Νήφων, ἐπίσκοπος Κωνσταντιανῆς τῆς κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν,” *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 35 (1936): 204–31, with the text at 210–31. For a paraphrase of the *VNiph* in Modern Greek see Ένας ἀσκητῆς ἐπίσκοπος: Ὁσιος Νήφων ἐπίσκοπος Κωνσταντιανῆς, 13th ed. (Oropos Attikis, 2013). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

2 L. Rydén, “The Date of the Life of St. Niphon, BHG 1371Z,” in *Greek and Latin Studies in Memory of Cajus Fabricius*, ed. S.-T. Teodorsson (Gothenburg, 1990), 33–40, here at 33.

3 Eustratiades, “Ο ὁσιος Νήφων,” 206–10; Rydén, “The Date,” esp. 34–36.

tenth or eleventh century.<sup>4</sup> Recently, Sergey Ivanov identified Constantiane with Constantia in Cyprus and argued for a date between 965 and 1037.<sup>5</sup> In both structure and content *VNiph* presents many similarities with two other lengthy *vitae*, the *Life of Basil the Younger* (hereafter *VBiun*) and the *Life of Andrew the Fool* (*VAnd*), both dated to the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> Like these two, in *VNiph* the biography of Niphon serves largely as a loose framework for his many dreams, visions, and teachings. Moreover, *VNiph* exhibits the same intense interest in the afterlife and the end times as the *VAnd* and *VBiun* (the latter also includes an extensive vision of the Last Judgment).<sup>7</sup> Rydén's cautious suggestion that *VNiph* is dependent on the former is, to my mind, correct.

Even in the context of middle Byzantine hagiography, Niphon's *vita* is exceedingly peculiar in its content. The list of the sins he committed during his period of profligacy is quite impressive and includes

4 Rydén pointed out many anachronisms. For example, Constantinople is described as being full of churches, which it was not in the fourth century; the title *protovestiarios*, held by the person who brought Niphon to Constantinople, is not securely attested before the ninth century; and some churches mentioned in the text were founded well after the fourth century. For a terminus post quem Rydén offers the mention of Halmyropolis (2), which he identifies with Halmyros, a settlement in the Pagasetic Gulf in Greece that first appears in the sources in the eleventh century. Mentions of *VNiph* in sources dating to the second half of the eleventh century, such as the Testament of Eustathios Boilas, provide the terminus ante quem.

5 S. Ivanov, "K datirovke žitija sv. Nifonta (BHG, 13712)," *VizVrem* 58 (1999): 72–75.

6 For *VBiun* see D. Sullivan, A.-M. Talbot, and S. McGrath, eds., *The Life of Saint Basil the Younger* (Washington, DC, 2014). For *VAnd* see L. Rydén, *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, 2 vols. (Uppsala, 1995). For the complex relationship of these texts, see Rydén, "The Date," 37–40; P. Magdalino, "What We Heard in the Lives of the Saints We Have Seen with Our Own Eyes: The Holy Man as Literary Text in Tenth-Century Constantinople," in *Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Howard-Johnston and P. Hayward (Oxford, 1999), 83–112; A. Timotin, "Byzantine Visionary Accounts of the Other World: A Reconsideration," in *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*, ed. J. Burke (Melbourne, 2006), 404–20. See also A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1999–2006), 2:200–203; Sullivan, Talbot, and McGrath, *Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, 48–53; S. Efthymiadis, "Hagiography from the 'Dark Age' to the Age of Symeon Metaphrastes (Eighth–Tenth Centuries)," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. S. Efthymiadis, 2 vols. (Farnham, 2011–14), 2:95–142, here at 125–27.

7 Parallels and differences between the two visions of the Last Judgment will be noted where appropriate.

singing in theaters, swearing, slandering, passing judgment, gluttony, fornication, and adultery (19, see also 50 and 96). But the one sin that is repeated several times is engagement in homosexual activities with young men and boys.<sup>8</sup> Niphon "pursued the sodomitic fetidness" and sullied the pure beauty of his soul with "unclean youths" (19).<sup>9</sup> Immediately after his repentance the devil appears in one of Niphon's dreams disguised as a boy with whom Niphon had sinned (29, where the boy complains that he has not seen Niphon for three days). In another instance the devil causes Niphon to commit "corruption of boys" (*παιδοφθορία*) in his dream (23), and later, when he confesses his sins to God inside a church, Niphon calls himself, among other things, a *παιδοφθόρος* (50). He also admits to the sin of "lusting after men" (*ἀνδρομανία*, 96). Niphon's means of combatting temptation are extreme. He places a small rock in his mouth for several days in order to avoid speaking obscenities (35). He beats himself with his fists and slaps himself one or even two hundred times a day (35). Once, in order to resist the temptation of fornication and his sodomitic tendencies, Niphon hits his thighs repeatedly with a stick to the point that they remain bruised and covered with marks for a long time (37). Equally remarkable are the author's crude attempts to aggrandize Niphon's virtues and importance, spiritual and otherwise.<sup>10</sup> He is visited by various saints, including the Theotokos and Saint Anastasia, who heal him from a grave illness (32), and Stephen, the Proto-Martyr (34). The author sees Niphon walking to a vigil surrounded by a multitude of angels and enclosed within a ring of crosses, one of them made of pure gold, another crystal-like (99). Niphon's prayers cause an angel to gather together the demons that have tempted him and give a thousand lashes to each

8 C. Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance entre réalité et imaginaire* (Paris, 2014), 205.

9 πορευόμενος γὰρ ἐμαίνετο νέοις ἀκαθάρτοις καὶ μετ' αὐτῶν κατεμίαινε τὸ καθαρὸν κάλλος τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, πορνείας καὶ μοιχείας σχολάζων, ἔτι δὲ τὸ ἐλκεῖν τὴν σοδομικὴν δυσωδίαν μετερχόμενος, Rystenکو, *Materiyaly*, 10.

10 The author is aware that his account of Niphon's achievements may not seem believable to all. In chapter 81 he mentions certain people who reviled the saint. Niphon prays extensively for them and teaches of the spiritual benefits of being criticized. But later Niphon sees in a vision the death of one of his critics: an angel, sent by God, strikes the critic with a terrible sword and takes his soul to the abyss (108).

one (107). Niphon has several exchanges with Christ. In one vision, Christ kisses him and promises that he will look favorably upon those who invoke Niphon's name, especially at their deathbed, a privilege virtually always reserved for the Theotokos. He also promises that he will come and receive Niphon's soul with his own hands (79). Indeed, the apostles, martyrs, prophets, hierarchs, the Theotokos, and Christ appear at Niphon's deathbed (157), in a scene strongly reminiscent of descriptions and images of the Dormition. Niphon's special relationship with the heavenly realm is also evident in the conclusion of his vision of the Last Judgment. God tells Niphon that he has shown him all these things because Niphon is his "friend and beloved son," and "to you as an heir to my kingdom I have revealed these things, which I have not shown to anybody else, so that you might know how much friendship lies between you and me" (95).

### The Vision of the Last Judgment

Niphon has this vision while contemplating his sins. He sees an oversized Christ surrounded by fearful heavenly forces, the beginning of the Second Coming. Christ orders the archangel Michael to prepare the throne in the valley of Josaphat and promises to take terrible revenge on various categories of sinners (82). Subsequently, he orders Michael to bring him the seven books of the aeons of the world. Christ opens the first, which begins with a statement on the Trinity and continues with the creation of the world, including Adam and Eve. The content of the next five books is not discussed. While reading the seventh book, which covers the incarnation, the apostles, and Emperor Constantine I, Christ is angered by the sinfulness and corruption of that aeon and stops reading in the middle (83). Then Michael, along with his troops, leaves to prepare the throne. He is followed by the other archangels and their battalions, marching and singing praises to God. The cross appears and is carried in the middle of two battalions (84). Christ orders Michael to raise the dead using a trumpet, and then the commander of the Principalities to seize the saints in the clouds. Christ also notices the tyranny of Satan on earth and orders another angelic commander to capture the "dragon" and his minions and throw them to the fiercest of punishments (85). The trumpet is sounded and the resurrection of the bodies occurs (86). Suddenly, a bright

cross appears in the firmament, followed by Christ seated on a fiery throne. Thus the Last Judgment begins. Some of the resurrected are snatched to heaven and placed on the right side of the throne. Of those who remain, the larger part are thrown directly to the Gehenna of fire. The rest tremble (87). Christ recites Matthew 25:34–45, at the conclusion of which a great river of fire appears, going toward the west. Both the righteous and the sinners pass through it to be tested (88). The sinners are taken to be punished. Surrounded by the singing angelic powers, Christ stands up and makes his way toward the bridal chamber, followed by his saints, and the gates are closed (89). In the bridal chamber, Christ gives out various rewards to his saints, in the order of their importance. The twelve apostles receive a throne each, as well as a crown. They are followed by the seventy disciples, martyrs, clergymen, monastics, prophets, laypeople, and so on (90). After this is concluded, a bride, the Mother of God, comes in, escorted by virgins. Christ and his mother embrace (93). Then Christ, along with his mother, John the Baptist, and all the saints enter the inner room, where all the spiritual goods are. They are so magnificent that Niphon cannot describe them (92). After the goods are distributed, heavenly powers start encircling the divine room like a city wall. Christ hands over all power to the Father (93), and the Father shines over the chamber. The angelic powers start singing a hymn of praise, which spreads throughout the chamber, becoming an unending song (94). At the conclusion of the vision, God instructs Niphon to record carefully what he has seen (95).

### Sources and Their Use

Many of the literary images of theophany and judgment in this vision are a pastiche of biblical and related texts (usually apocryphal and apocalyptic), with many of which the author of *VNiph* seems to have been familiar.<sup>11</sup> Motifs of the resurrection of

11 For *VNiph* and related apocalyptic texts see, selectively, E. Patlagean, "Byzance et son autre monde: Observations sur quelques récits," in *Faire croire: modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: table ronde, Rome, 22–23 juin 1979* (Rome, 1981), 201–21; J. Baun, "Last Things," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, 3. Early medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, ed. T. Noble et al. (Cambridge, 2008), 606–24; Timotin, "Byzantine Visionary Accounts"; idem, *Visions, prophéties*

the dead, judgment, salvation, and condemnation are drawn from Matthew 8:12, 24:29–31, 25:34–45 (which *VNiph* quotes verbatim), Mark 9:43–49, John 5:25–29, Revelation 20:11–15, and 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10. The fiery throne surrounded by innumerable angelic powers, the fiery river, the setting up of thrones, and the opening of books are found in Daniel 7:9–10.<sup>12</sup> The cross that precedes the Lord before the judgment is alluded to in Matthew 24:30. Trumpets are part and parcel of apocalyptic texts and are found in Revelation 8–9, the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*,<sup>13</sup> and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (31),<sup>14</sup> among many others.<sup>15</sup> And the idea that the saved will receive their crowns and robes at Christ's Second Coming is found in Revelation 4:4 and 6:11, as well as in the *Ascension of Isaiah* (9).<sup>16</sup>

These texts, however, serve essentially as inspirations, a collection of often biblically sanctioned motifs dispersed throughout the vision, and are appropriated, enlarged, and manipulated in order to create a distinctive narrative of Christ's Second Coming and the Last Judgment. Take, for example, the seven books of the aeons (83). The recording of humankind's deeds is well

attested in biblical and apocryphal literature.<sup>17</sup> For example, Psalm 138 (139):16 says, "My unwrought state your eyes beheld, and in your book all shall be written." The opening of books is also commonly found in visions of the end, as in Revelation 20:12.<sup>18</sup> And the number seven is also important in biblical and apocryphal literature, as is the sevenfold ordering of time.<sup>19</sup> But *VNiph* takes these commonplace motifs and expands them into a grandiose account. The seven books that contain not only the deeds of men but the whole history of humankind are opened one by one and read carefully by Christ at his Second Coming.

Elsewhere as well, the author of *VNiph* adopts and adapts motifs from well-known sources. For example, the splendid procession of the singing heavenly powers carrying the throne of judgment to the valley of Josaphat (84) would have triggered in the audience and readers of the *vita* associations with the numerous processions of the Byzantine rite, in which objects were often carried to the accompaniment of antiphonal hymnody. Most of what the angels sing in this chapter could have been heard regularly in the Divine Liturgy and other services.<sup>20</sup> Yet the angels do not sing processional hymns, or even texts sung in liturgical excerpts, but lines that are appropriate in the context of this procession. Isaiah 6:3 ("Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of his glory," also used in the Anaphora) glorifies God, the lord of the heavenly powers; Psalm 49 (50):1–3 ("God of gods, the Lord, spoke and summoned the earth from the sun's

*et pouvoir à Byzance: Étude sur l'hagiographie méso-byzantine (IX–XI siècles)* (Paris, 2010), esp. 283–342. In addition to the examples in this section, see the commentary below on the Vision of Kaoumos and the *Narration of Zosimos*.

12 The throne, the rivers of fire, and the countless angelic powers also appear in 1 *Enoch* 14 (second century BCE–first century CE); see M. Black, ed., *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (Leiden, 1970), 29. See also E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY, 1982), 1:5–89, here at 20–21.

13 The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* was likely composed some time between the first century BCE and the first century CE; see O. Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Zephaniah," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:497–515, here at 514–15.

14 This text likely dated to the first or second century CE; see R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:681–705, here at 704.

15 *VNiph*, however, seems to draw directly from 1 Corinthians 15:51–52: "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (Text from the New Testament is cited from the *New Revised Standard Version*.)

16 For this composite text, parts of which may date to as early as the second century CE, see M. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 2:143–76.

17 For a comprehensive list of parallels see D. Allison, *Testament of Abraham* (Berlin, 2003), 264–65.

18 "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books."

19 M. Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse: A Brief History* (Chichester, 2010), 41. Rydén, "Date," 37 has rightly suggested that in *VNiph* each aeon corresponds to a millenium (Byzantines reckoned time from the creation of the world, placed at about 5500 BCE). Because Christ stops in the middle of the seventh aeon (83), the author of *VNiph* expected Christ's Second Coming to occur in ca. 1000. This also reflects the Byzantine preoccupation with the ending of the world at around the turn of the first millenium CE. For these issues see also P. Magdalino, "The Year 1000 in Byzantium," in *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. P. Magdalino (Leiden, 2002), 233–70; Sullivan, Talbot, and McGrath, *Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, 48–53.

20 See the pertinent footnotes in the translation, below.

rising even to its setting. Out of Sion is the splendor of his beauty; God will come conspicuously. . . .”) fits well with the end of the world and Christ’s Second Coming. Psalm 81 (82):8 (“Rise up, O God, judge the earth, because you will gain possession of all the nations”), especially in combination with the reference to Psalm 95 (96):13, relates to Christ’s judgment of all nations. Thus the author appropriates the familiar imagery of liturgical processions but adapts the content to fit the context of the vision.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly inventive is the use of imagery from the Song of Songs. The allegorical interpretation of Christ (or God) as the bridegroom and Mary as the bride was in circulation already in the fifth century.<sup>22</sup> Yet the author of *VNiph* places this in an explicitly eschatological context,<sup>23</sup> a union that is the highlight and the conclusion of the exaltation of the saved. In addition, the author is aware of the dominant Christian exegetical model of the Song of Songs, first put forward by Origen (d. ca. 254), whereby the bride is identified as the church.<sup>24</sup> The author of *VNiph* embeds this understanding in his narrative in a subtle way: the Virgin appears as the bride, yet all the saved enter the bridal room. It is the whole church that joins Christ in an eternal union. The text itself supports this reading: earlier in the vision, when Christ opens the books of the

aeons, he calls the whole church “My bride, very beautiful, lovely and honored” (83).<sup>25</sup>

A final example that illustrates the author’s creative fusion of common motifs comes from the description of the rewards—primarily different kinds of crowns—that Christ gives to the saved. In Christianity, the idea that the righteous will be rewarded with crowns in the afterlife is already found in the New Testament,<sup>26</sup> as for example in 2 Timothy 4:7–8, where the pseudo-Pauline author expects that at the Judgment the Lord will award him and the other saved the crown of righteousness.<sup>27</sup> The pervasiveness of the motif is evident in its numerous manifestations in early Christian and Byzantine art.<sup>28</sup> Crowns were at times associated with a specific category of saints, such as martyrs or monastics, but were eventually applied to all saints (although not to all the saved, as is also the

21 See also the later procession of Christ and the saved (89), which exhibits the same characteristics.

22 As in a homily by Proklos, bishop of Constantinople (d. 446 or 447), PG 65:756B. See also PG 96:692–96; 98:292–93. For further parallels see M. Evangelatou, “Threads of Power: Clothing Symbolism, Human Salvation, and Female Identity in the Illustrated Homilies by Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos,” *DOP* 68 (2014): 241–323, here at 275, n. 52. Interestingly, this interpretation does not appear in Byzantine exegetical literature of the Song of Songs before the fourteenth century, see K. Linardou, “The Couch of Solomon, a Monk, a Byzantine Lady and the Song of Songs,” in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. Swanson (Suffolk, 2004), 73–85, here at 77.

23 Matthew 25:1–13, in the so-called Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, also uses wedding language for the Kingdom, although this symbolism is secondary to the moral of the story.

24 For an extended investigation of Origen’s commentary see J. King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture: The Bridegroom’s Perfect Marriage-Song* (Oxford, 2005). The idea is also present in the Bible; see for example Ephesians 5:21–27; Revelation 19:7–9, 21:2, 22:17.

25 Wedding language is also present in *VBiun*. For example, a spiritual wedding banquet, following the Divine Liturgy, is part of the post-Judgment celebrations (5.128). Here too the bride is the church (see also 5.17, 5.132). In 5.140, Christ asserts that “the space of my bridal chamber is wide and extraordinary large, lacking only many invited guests.” The difference, however, is that *VNiph* goes beyond what is symbolic language and envisions the post-Judgment existence of the saved as an actual bridal chamber protected by orbiting angelic powers, where they lead a life of continuous praise in song, in contrast to the more traditional motif of the heavenly city in *VBiun*.

26 The origin of this motif is the practice in antiquity of using crowns or wreaths as prizes for winners of athletic competitions. Furthermore, wreaths were used in funerary settings. See L. Deubner, “Die Bedeutung des Kranzes im klassischen Altertum,” *ARW* 30 (1933): 70–104; K. Baus, *Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Tertullians* (Bonn, 1940).

27 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” The crown as an eschatological reward is common in the Pauline and pseudo-Pauline literature and is also found elsewhere in the New Testament; see G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, 1964–76), 7:615–36, here at 629–35.

28 See for example the sixth-century apse mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, where Christ awards the young martyr a crown; the sixth-century mosaic apse of the Basilica Euphrasiana in Poreč, Croatia, where several saints flanking a seated Virgin and child carry crowns; and the fourteenth-century micromosaic icon of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, now at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, where the crowns hover over the dying martyrs.

case in *VNiph*).<sup>29</sup> However, the lengthy description of the awards in *VNiph* is also reminiscent of palace ceremonies, specifically promotions as instructed in the *Book of Ceremonies*, and distributions of largesse, described by Liutprand of Cremona (d. ca. 972), the Lombard ambassador to Constantinople. The latter describes a ceremony that took place the week before Palm Sunday. Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (d. 959) gives members of his court bags of money (higher officials also received silk cloaks).<sup>30</sup> The courtiers come to the room one by one, after being called by a herald in strict order of precedence.<sup>31</sup> Although some details differ—the crown was the imperial insignia par excellence, not to be worn by courtiers—the process that Liutprand describes is very similar to that in *VNiph*.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the different groups of the saved are distinguished from each other on the basis of their crowns, the same way the different ranks of the courtiers were distinguished by their garments.<sup>33</sup>

## The Sinners

In a list that is meant to be all-encompassing, Christ enumerates the sinners not at the actual time of

judgment but right after his initial appearance (82). The sinners are: idolaters, heretics, the Jews, sodomites, adulterers, thieves, murderers, the rancorous, the greedy, and usurers; as well as Christians who deny the resurrection and believe in the transmigration of souls, magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, and soothsayers, those who drink wine with stringed instruments and drums, those who sing, dance, use foul language, and are conceited, those who do not value Scripture, those who practice witchcraft, rulers who rebel against God, corrupt (especially greedy) clergymen, and negligent monks.

The two last categories receive the most attention from Christ. More than any others, such criticisms must reflect the contemporary concerns of the *vita*'s author. At the same time, they are part of a general trend in related hagiographical texts. Criticism of monks and clergymen is also a prominent feature in *VBiun* and in *VAnd*.<sup>34</sup> Like these two, Niphon is an unconventional model of sanctity. He spends most of his life on the fringes of the religious establishment. Although he attends services, receives communion, and visits monasteries, his interactions with the church hierarchy are nonexistent. Niphon's spirituality is a very personal one. Even when it comes to repentance and forgiveness of sins, the middleman is cut out, as Niphon simply goes to a church and confesses his sins to God (44).<sup>35</sup> Late in his life Niphon does become part of the establishment, but his selection as bishop, his recognition by the patriarch Alexander and the future patriarch Athanasios, and his extraordinary success as a shepherd of souls are meant to lionize his personality and set him apart from everybody else.

Of particular interest are some categories of sinners whose inclusion is meant to sustain the author's deceit that the events take place in the fourth century.<sup>36</sup> In addition to the "idolaters" who honor stones and wood, only two specific kinds of heretics are mentioned: those who separate Christ from the Father and those who deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The former alludes to a subordinationist Christology, most likely Arianism. The latter is a clear reference

29 See the excellent overviews in C. Walter, "The Iconographical Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gračanica," in *Vizantijska umetnost početkom XIV veka: Naucni skup u Gracanici 1973* [*L'art byzantin au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*] (Belgrade, 1978), 183–200, here at 185–98; S. Davis, "Completing the Race and Receiving the Crown: 2 Timothy 4:7–8 in Early Christian Monastic Epitaphs at Kellia and Pherme," in *Asceticism and Exegesis in Early Christianity*, ed. H.-U. Wiedemann (Göttingen, 2013), 334–73, here at 340–53. See also Baus, *Der Kranz*; P. Grotowski, *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints: Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843–1261)* (Leiden, 2010), 284–94.

30 See also N. Oikonomides, "Title and Income at the Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. H. Maguire (Washington, DC, 1997), 199–215, here at 200–202. In a comparable, although much shorter ceremony in *VBiun* (5.115–118), Christ also awards both crowns and robes. Only Mary, John the Baptist, and the twelve and the seventy disciples are mentioned specifically.

31 P. Squatriti, *The Complete Works of Liutprand of Cremona* (Washington, DC, 2012), 200–202.

32 The implication seems to be that the status of the saved is equal to or even more exalted than that of the emperor. In a dream in *VAnd*, the saint finds himself in paradise dressed in some imperial regalia, including a crown; see Rydén, *Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, 1:50–52. For this dream see Timotin, *Visions*, 308–18.

33 E. Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, 39–52.

34 Magdalino, "What We Heard" (n. 6 above), 92–96.

35 Interestingly, this is in contrast to *VBiun* (2.25–29), which insists that one should confess to a priest.

36 The seventh and last book of the acons (83) seems also to end with Constantine I; see above.

to the *pneumatomachoi*, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> Arianism was condemned in the Council of Nicaea in 325 and again in the Council of Constantinople in 381, which also condemned the *pneumatomachoi*. No other, later heresy is mentioned.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, the curious mention of Christians who believe in the transmigration of souls and therefore deny the resurrection is meant to support the antiquity of the narration. According to Alexandros Alexakis, “most of the reincarnational philosophies and sects were established and flourished during the first four centuries of the Christian era.” Alexakis finds little evidence for the belief in transmigration of souls after the seventh century.<sup>39</sup>

Another curiosity in *VNiph* pertains to the fate of the damned. After the general resurrection and the separation of the righteous from sinners, most of the latter are cast without further judgment into the “Gehenna of fire” (87). There are no additional details, but it is safe to assume that they are the worst offenders.<sup>40</sup> Although it may be simply rhetorical exaggeration, the text implies that these sinners will be completely annihilated rather than eternally punished. This is evident

in other instances where Gehenna is mentioned. For example, Cain “should be burned to ashes in the fire of Gehenna,” while his brother Abel “will live into the ages” (83), and Christ “will dissolve like a candle in Gehenna” the aforementioned deniers of the resurrection (82). The rest of those who remain, both sinners and the righteous, undergo a trial by fire (88). A large river of fire, as big as the sea, appears, going from east to west. The righteous enter first; they appear like “pure gold in the middle of fire” and their works are not destroyed. In contrast, the works of sinners are “consumed like straw,” although their bodies were preserved to burn in eternity. It is the fire that scatters them “throughout all the punishments” (89). This episode constitutes an adaptation of 1 Corinthians 3:12–15<sup>41</sup> and reflects the traditional patristic exegesis of this rather difficult excerpt from Paul’s letter, especially the part about the builder who will be saved, even if his works perish. John Chrysostom (d. 404), for example, argues that the person whose works cannot withstand the fire will be “saved”—that is, he will be preserved to suffer in the fire.<sup>42</sup> The section on the sinners concludes anticlimactically by simply mentioning that they were led to their “punishments.” Various punishments, such as the abyss, Tartaros, Gehenna, and crushing, are mentioned by Christ at the beginning of the vision (82).

## The Saved and the Topography of the Afterlife

*VNiph*, however, is interested mostly in the righteous. The rather tedious description of the awards ceremony (90) is one of the longest sections of the vision.<sup>43</sup> In order of appearance, those who join Christ in the bridal

37 For Arianism see most recently C. Galvão-Sobrinho, *Doctrine and Power: Theological Controversy and Christian Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2013). For the *pneumatomachoi* see W.-D. Hauschild, *Die Pneumatomachen: Eine Untersuchung zur Dogmengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg, 1967). See also *VBiun*, 5.79–83 for the fate of Arians and the *pneumatomachoi*.

38 Cf. the list of heretics in the vision of the Last Judgment in *VBiun* (4.29) that includes Iconoclasts. See also 5.79–87, 5.88–94 for a detailed description of the heretics’ appearance and punishments.

39 A. Alexakis, “Was There Life beyond the Life Beyond? Byzantine Ideas on Reincarnation and Final Restoration,” *DOP* 55 (2001): 155–77, quotation at 161. An exception was John Italos (d. after 1082), who was condemned for promoting transmigration, although it is unclear whether he actually held such a belief. See *ibid.*, 156, 172.

40 There is a comparable event in *VBiun* (5.5–6), where idolaters and “other impious ones” are hurled into the river of fire without judgment. Because the remaining sinners are those “who had received the [Mosaic] law so that their observance of it might be judged” (5.7), the ones who perished immediately are presumably those who did not receive the law. In 5.36, people “who did not possess the law, but were righteous by nature through observing the law’s provisions” are admitted into the heavenly city, thus suggesting that those who perished immediately were those who both did not have the law and were guilty of sins. And yet in 5.50 this exact category of people is condemned. The nature of those cast into the fire in 5.5–6 remains unclear. In contrast to *VNiph*, however, they remain alive and are tormented, see 5.33.10–12.

41 “Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.”

42 PG 61:75–81, here at 79. According to Basil of Caesarea (d. 379) the fire is capable of burning the sinners and illuminating the “joyous ones,” see PG 29b:297. For further examples see V. Kepetzi, “Empereur, piété et rémission des péchés dans deux Ekphraseis byzantines: Image et rhétorique,” *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 20 (1998): 231–44, here at 239–41.

43 In contrast to *VBiun* (5.115–18), where the corresponding description is very short.

chamber are: the twelve apostles (they receive the highest dignities among the saints), the seventy disciples, martyrs, clerics, monastics (who become cherubim and seraphim, actualizing the ancient trope that equates monastic with angelic life), prophets, laypeople, those poor in spirit, those who mourned for their sins, the meek and the honest, those who hunger and thirst for justice and those who remember his commandments, those who have exacted good works with a pure heart, the peacemakers, those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake, those who were reviled on account of Christ, those who repented but did not devote themselves to good works, those who were charitable but were also slanderers and fornicators, those who did not know Christ and are not baptized but followed the divine law, the children of Christians who died in infancy, the Makars, and the Mother of God with her retinue. Some of the saved, those who performed neither good nor bad deeds, were not allowed to enter, but were given "a place of inheritance and a little light." Thus the righteous are divided roughly into two groups, one based on identity or profession (e.g. apostles, clerics, monastics), the other on virtue (e.g. the peacemakers, the meek).<sup>44</sup>

As with the sinners, some categories of the saved deserve further comment. The last to be admitted to the bridal chamber are a group of people "as luminous as the bridegroom himself," who receive special honors from Christ. The reaction of the other saints in the bridal chamber—they wonder who these people are—further undescores their mystique. Eventually, they recognize them as the Makars or the Blessed Ones. The apocryphal story of the Makars is embedded in a narration (διήγησις) in which an ascetic called Zosimos visits their island. There Zosimos learns that they are the Rechabites,<sup>45</sup> who, in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, left Jerusalem and, with angelic help, came to that island, where they still live in a paradisiacal, prelapsarian state.<sup>46</sup> This inclusion of the Makars

among the righteous is, to my knowledge, unique in descriptions of the Last Judgment, and the reasons for it are not immediately clear. Some of their habits, such as unceasing prayer, are strongly reminiscent of ascetic practices. Thus the Makars could be considered as representing ideal monastics.<sup>47</sup> However, they also procreate, even if sparingly,<sup>48</sup> and their state of sinless and temptation- and worry-free existence is a reward for their faithfulness to God rather than the result of their ascetic achievements.<sup>49</sup> The vision too emphasizes their purity and sinlessness,<sup>50</sup> concepts that are important throughout *VNiph*.

There are three categories of people who barely avoid punishment: those who repented and avoided evil, but did not do good works; those who were charitable but were also slanderers and fornicators; and those who performed neither good nor bad deeds. In all cases, they are morally in the middle, as reflected in the fact that they will enjoy eternity in barely lit places. The inspiration for this arrangement seems to have been a popular story, the vision of the Kaïoumos, probably composed in the seventh century.<sup>51</sup> In Cyprus, a certain Philentolos performed significant acts of charity but was also prey to fornication. After he died, the clergy debated whether he was saved or not. In a vision, God

See also E. Martin, "The Account of the Blessed Ones: A Study of the Development of an Apocryphon on the Rechabites and Zosimos (the Abode of the Rechabites)" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1979). For the Greek and Roman sources of the "island of the Blessed ones" see J. Charlesworth, "History of the Rechabites," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:443–61, here at 447. In some recensions of the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander visits this island. See for example J. Trumpf, ed., *Anonymi Byzantini vita Alexandri regis Macedonum* (Stuttgart, 1974), ch. 31.

47 R. Nikolsky, "The History of the Rechabites and the Jeremiah Literature," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13, no. 2 (2002): 185–207, particularly 202–4.

48 Charlesworth, *History of the Rechabites*, 66.

49 Ibid., 60, 72.

50 ... διὰ τοῦτο δὲ εἰσέχθησαν ἔσχατον εἰς τὴν παστάδα τῆς ἁγίας μερίδος, ἵνα ἰδόντες πάντες οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος εὐαρεστήσαντες τῷ Θεῷ θανατώσων τὴν λαμπρότητα καὶ καθαρότητα αὐτῶν ... διότι οὐδόλως εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτοῖς μῶμος ἢ δόλος, ἢ πάλαι ἁμαρτία, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐπειράσθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.

51 F. Halkin, "La vision de Kaïoumos et le sort éternel de Philentolos Olympiou (BHG 1322w)," *AB* 63 (1945): 56–64. See also C. Kyrris, "The Admission of the Souls of Immoral but Human People into the Limbus Puerorum According to the Cypriot Abbot Kaïoumos (Seventh Century AD) Compared to Quran's Al-Araf (Suras 7.44–6, 57.13)," *RESEE* 9 (1971): 461–77.

44 The latter are largely inspired by the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–12. See also *VBiun* (5.38–46).

45 See Jeremiah 35.

46 The *Narration of Zosimos*, which includes the history of the Rechabites, is a largely composite text and survives in several languages. For the Greek version see J. Charlesworth, *The History of the Rechabites*, vol. 1, *The Greek Recension* (Chico, CA, 1982). For the state of scholarship on this text see C. Knights, "The Rechabites Revisited: The History of the Rechabites Twenty-Five Years On," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 23, no. 4 (2014): 307–20.

revealed to the abbot Kaïoumos that Philentolos stood between paradise and a furnace, looking longingly at the former (*VNiph* explicitly quotes Philentolos's situation, that is, charity offset by fornication). Thus, in addition to the hierarchy of importance, marked by the differences in crowns and other accoutrements, *VNiph* establishes also a topographical hierarchy. While Christ and the most righteous move, after the bestowing of awards, to the (inner) divine chamber, which is brilliantly illuminated by the Father's "never setting light" (94), those morally in the middle remain outside, in places that receive little light. Like Philentolos, they avoid punishment, but they do not enjoy the goods reserved for the truly righteous.<sup>52</sup>

The final destination for the righteous is the inner bridal room, which they enter along with Christ. Although wedding symbolism in an eschatological context is present in the New Testament and elsewhere,<sup>53</sup> the image of the post-Last Judgment paradise as a bridal room, encircled by angelic powers, lit by the light of the Father, and filled with unending songs of praise, is to my knowledge unique to *VNiph*. The most common conceptualization of the Kingdom is the Heavenly Jerusalem, either by itself or in combination with a lush garden or plain.<sup>54</sup> The metaphor of the heavenly city,

however, is not completely abandoned here, as Christ orders the heavenly powers to encircle the divine chamber "like a wall encircles a city" (93).

Christ's role in the chamber is based primarily on New Testament theology. In a brilliant exegetical visualization of 1 Corinthians 15:24–29, he subjects himself to the Father and hands all authority over to him. Christ, however, also becomes king and "high priest to the ages," a reference to the Christology of the epistle to the Hebrews.

The experience of the righteous is surprisingly sensory. They see the unapproachable light, they smell the fragrance of the divinity, they hear the hymn of the angels, they eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, they hold in their hands the eternal goods, and they dance. Thus, *VNiph* reiterates an important tenet of Byzantine eschatology: the damned will experience their full punishment and the saved their complete requital only after the general resurrection, when they receive their bodies back.<sup>55</sup> For *VNiph*, the afterlife of the righteous is, essentially, a perpetual sacramental joy, but one that has some tangible rewards.

## Some Conclusions

The vision of the Last Judgment is the most prominent example of the *vita's* intense interest in the afterlife and the end of days, another trend that it shares with *VBiun* and *VAnd*. Scholars have connected this tendency with millenarianism and the nearing end of the world, expected to occur sometime at the turn of the first millennium CE—that is, shortly after the composition of these texts.<sup>56</sup> *VNiph* dedicates considerable space to the fate of the soul immediately after death, a process conventionally called the provisional judgment (101–8).<sup>57</sup>

52 See also an analogous incident in *VBiun* (5.73–74, 5.76–77) where Christ condemns a group of monastics whose good and bad qualities are evenly divided. The personification of Mercy intercedes for them and they are brought back from the fire. They are not allowed, however, a place in the heavenly city but are settled outside. Similarly, unbaptized infants are located far from "the allotment and portion of the chosen ones" (5.78). See also *VBiun* 5.133, where passage through the heavenly gate is reserved for martyrs and ascetics, new Sion is for those of lesser spiritual attainments, and the new Earth is for married laypeople.

53 See, for example, Matthew 25:1–13; Revelation 19:6–9; 21:2, 9–10; *VBiun* (5.128).

54 See, selectively, C. Angelidi, "Remarques sur la description de la Jérusalem céleste," *JOB* 32, no. 3 (1982): 207–15; H. Maguire, "Paradise Withdrawn," in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, DC, 2002), 23–35; idem, "The Heavenly City in Ekphrasis and in Art," in *Villes de toute beauté: L'ekphrasis des cités dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves; Actes du colloque international, Prague, 25–26 novembre 2011*, ed. P. Odorico and Ch. Messis (Paris, 2012), 37–48; C. Cupane, "The Heavenly City: Religious and Secular Visions of the Other World in Byzantine Literature," in *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. G. Calofonos and C. Angelidi (Farnham, 2014), 53–68. Even *VNiph* describes it in such terms earlier, when the saint relates the vision of a certain Sozomen (68).

55 See for example PG 28:609 (pseudo-Athanasios); M. Richard and J. Munitiz, eds., *Anastasioi Sinaitae Quaestiones et Responsiones* (Turnhout, 2006), 29–41.

56 See, selectively, Magdalino, "The Year 1000"; idem, "What We Heard"; Sullivan, Talbot, and McGrath, *Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, 48–53. See also Timotin, "Byzantine Visionary Accounts," where the connection to millenarianism is doubted.

57 See, selectively, M. Jugie, "La doctrine des fins dernières dans l'Église gréco-russe," *EO* 17 (1915–1914): 5–22, 209–28, 402–21; N. Constat, "'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream': The Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature," *DOP* 55 (2001): 91–124; V. Marinis, "He Who Is at the Point of Death: The Fate of the Soul in Byzantine Art and Liturgy," *Gesta* 54 (2015): 59–84; idem, *Death*

In a series of visions Niphon is made to observe the fate of several individuals, including a charitable man and an abused slave who committed suicide. Although its coverage of the provisional judgment is not as systematic as that in *VBiun*, where the saint's servant, Theodora, passes through several different demonic tollhouses before reaching the throne of God, *VNiph* offers more variety and provides information about other possible complications and outcomes of the heavenward journey not explicitly found in *VBiun*. This and the vision of the Last Judgment paint a complete picture of the afterlife, both temporary and eternal. *VNiph* supplies, essentially, a manual of what one is to expect after death.

The function of the vision is didactic. This is evident especially at the end of the narrative, when God instructs Niphon to record what he has seen (95), undeniably for others to read and hear. The goal is to inspire the audience to repentance and a change of ways. In the next chapter (96), Niphon instructs what the proper reaction ought to be. He contemplates the vision for two weeks and then grieves extensively over his multitudinous transgressions, asks God for forgiveness, and desires the rewards that he has seen. What distinguishes this vision's didacticism, especially in comparison to related texts, is its universal character and its emphasis on the fate of the righteous rather than the punishments of the damned. Although the vision shows a special interest in unworthy clerics and monastics, its message is meant to be applicable to all Christians, and indeed to all humankind.<sup>58</sup> And even though sinners experience God's wrath, it is the rewards of the saved that are described in detail, a rare instance of positive reinforcement in a genre that relishes the description of grotesque punishments.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, in contrast to the whole *vita*, which is mostly a loose aggregation of independent units such as dreams, miracles, and *erotoapokriseis*, the vision exhibits

from beginning to end a rigorous narrative coherence.<sup>60</sup> Each episode is self-contained and cogent, and the transitions between them, mostly marked by processions large and small, are fluent and seamless. Unsurprisingly, the center of the whole story is Christ. Not only does he control the narrative movement but his moods affect the tone of each episode. Christ is predictably angry at the sinners and exceedingly glad upon seeing the righteous (see, for example, 88). But between these two extremes there is a variety of emotions. While reading the book of the seventh aeon, he despairs so much that he slaps his forehead and covers his eyes, standing like that for some time (83, an act familiar to all who have graded final papers). He is amused and smiles at those baptized who died as children, who demand that they be rewarded in the afterlife, since they did not enjoy any earthly pleasures (90). He is mildly irritated by those who fall in the middle, being neither good nor bad (90). And he rejoices at seeing his mother (91). Try as one might, it would be hard to find a Christ that is so tyrannically divine and, at the same time, so familiarly human.

### Notes on the Greek Text and the Translation

The Greek text is taken from Rystencko's edition, which was based on Athos, MS Panteleemonos 79 (Lambros 5585). Rystencko also consulted the following manuscripts:

Moscow, State Historical Museum,

Sinod gr. 401 = M

Paris, BNF, MS 1195 = P<sup>1</sup>

Paris, BNF, MS Coislin 301 = P<sup>2</sup>

I have corrected obvious typographical and orthographical mistakes. In the few instances where I prefer a variant reading, I note it in the footnotes. In the very few instances where there is no source, then the emendation is my suggestion. Translations of excerpts from the Septuagint are from A. Pietersma and B. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford, 2007). For the New Testament I use the *New Revised Standard Version*.

and the Afterlife in Byzantium: The Fate of the Soul in Theology, Liturgy, and Art (Cambridge, 2017), 15–48.

58 In contrast, the vision in *VBiun* has a pronounced anti-Jewish character: see Timotin, "Byzantine Visionary Accounts," 412–14.

59 See, for example, the detailed descriptions in *VBiun* (5.50–5.114); in a homily titled Περὶ τῶν ἐν πίστει κεκοιμημένων, pseudonymously attributed to John of Damascus, PG 95:248–77; and in the *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* and that of *Anastasia* (both composed between the ninth and eleventh centuries), J. Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium: Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007).

60 For an excellent overview of Byzantine narrative techniques see E. Bourbouhakis and I. Nilsson, "Byzantine Narrative: The Form of Storytelling in Byzantium," in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. L. James (Chichester, 2010), 263–74.

*Greek Text*

Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νήφωνος ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μὲν ἀσκήσαντος, ἐπισκόπου δὲ γενομένου Κωνσταντινιανῆς τῆς κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν.

82. [p. 82] Ἐτερόν τι φοβερόν καὶ φρικτόν, ἀδελφοί, ἀκούσατε διήγημα, ὃ ἐν μιᾷ ὁ δίκαιος ἰδὼν εἰς ἔκστασιν μεγάλην καὶ φόβον ἐνέπεσεν [p. 83]. Ἐν μιᾷ γὰρ μετὰ τὸ τελῆσαι αὐτὸν τὸν νυκτερινὸν κανόνα ὡς ἔθος εἶχεν ἐπάνω λίθου κοιμᾶσθαι, τῆς ὥρας οὔσης ὥσπερ μεσονυκτίου, ἐκάθητο ἀγρυπνῶν καὶ προσέχων ἐπὶ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, σελήνης οὔσης καὶ ἀστέρων ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· ὡς οὖν ἐκάθητο μόνος, ἐπιμνησθεὶς τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ, ἐθρήνει δεινῶς καὶ ὑπομιμνήσκων ἑαυτὸν τὴν φοβερὰν ὥραν τῆς κρίσεως· καθήμενος δὲ καὶ θρηνῶν, ἄφνω ὄρᾳ, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπήρθη τὸ στερέωμα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς ὀθόνη, καὶ βλέπει παραυτὰ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ὑπερμεγέθη ἐστῶτα εἰς τὸν ἀέρα ἔνδον τοῦ στερεώματος, κύκλῳ δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰστήκει πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις τῶν οὐρανῶν μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου· ἄγγελοι, ἀρχάγγελοι καὶ τάγματα φοβερά καὶ ἐξαίσια ὥσπερ μελισσῶν μετὰ τάξεως καὶ αἰδοῦς καὶ εὐλαβείας πολλῆς.

Εἶτα νεύει ὁ Κύριος τῷ στρατηγῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς τάγματος καὶ ἦλθεν πλησίον αὐτοῦ ἑκθαμβος καὶ σφόδρα φρίττων, καὶ φησὶν πρὸς αὐτόν· “Μιχαήλ, Μιχαήλ, ὁ ἀρχὼν τῆς διαθήκης, ἄρον τὸν θρόνον τὸν πυρίμορφον τῆς δόξης μου σὺν τῇ τάξει σου καὶ πορεύου εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τοῦ Ἰωσαφάτ,<sup>a</sup> κακεῖ ἐτοίμασον αὐτὸν εἰς θεϊαν παραγωγὴν τῆς παρουσίας μου· ἦκεν γὰρ ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως, ἵνα λάβῃ ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ—ποιήσω γὰρ τοῦτο ἐν τάχει, διότι ἐπὶ θύραις ἡ ἡμέρα ἐστίν.

Ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω τοὺς τὰ εἰδῶλα προσκυνούντας, καὶ ἐμὲ τὸν ποιητὴν αὐτῶν ἀρνησαμένους· οἵτινες λίθους καὶ ξύλα ἐσεβάσθησαν ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς εἰς ὑπουργίαν, οὗτοι πάντες συντριβήσονται ὡς σκεύη κεραμέως, οἱ ἐχθροί μου οἱ αἵρετικοί, οἱ τολμήσαντες

*Translation*

The life and conduct of our holy father Niphon who practiced asceticism in Constantinople and also became bishop of Constantiniane, which is near Alexandria.

82. [p. 82] Hear, brothers, another awe-inspiring and harrowing story, which the righteous man saw one day and fell into great ecstasy and fear [p. 83]. One night, after performing the regular nocturnal prayers, he lay down to sleep, as was his habit, on a stone. The time was about midnight, but he sat awake and was observing the loftiness of the sky, and the moon and stars in the sky. And as he was sitting by himself, he remembered his sins and he mourned terribly, reminding himself of the fearful hour of judgment. As he was sitting and mourning, he suddenly looked, and, behold, the firmament of the sky was lifted like a linen sheet,<sup>1</sup> and he saw straightaway our Lord Jesus Christ in huge form, standing in the air inside the firmament. All of heaven's forces stood in a circle around him in fear and trembling: angels, archangels, as well as fearful and extraordinary battalions, standing very orderly, with respect and great reverence, as if they were bees.<sup>2</sup>

Then the Lord signaled to the general of one of the battalions, who approached astounded and shuddering greatly. And [the Lord] said to him: “Michael, Michael, lord of the covenant, raise up together with your order the fiery throne of my glory and go to the valley of Josaphat,<sup>3</sup> and there prepare it as a divine herald of my coming. For the time of judgment has come, so that everyone will receive according to his deeds—and I will do this swiftly, because the day is at hand.

*I will take vengeance*<sup>4</sup> on those who worship idols and reject me, their creator. Those who honor stones and wood,<sup>5</sup> which were given to them for service, all of them will be *shattered like a potter's vessels*,<sup>6</sup> [along with] my enemies the heretics, who dared to separate me from

1 See Revelation 6:14; Acts 10:11, 11:5.

2 See Daniel 7:10.

3 The valley where the Last Judgment will take place; see Joel 3:2, 12.

4 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

5 See Revelation 9:20.

6 Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27.

a Rystenkos has Ἰωσαφ. The variant reading is attested in M and P<sup>1</sup>.

χωρίσαι με τοῦ Πατρός μου, οἱ τολμήσαντες τὸ παράκλητόν μου Πνεῦμα εἰς κτίσμα καταγαγεῖν. Οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ κολάσει τῇ μενούσῃ αὐτοῖς.

Τοὺς δὲ σταυρώσαντάς με Ἰουδαίους καὶ μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἐμφανῇ ποιήσω ἐμαυτόν· ἐμοὶ ἐδόθη ἡ ἐξουσία, ἡ τιμὴ καὶ τὸ κράτος. Ἐγὼ κρινῶ δικαίως· αὐτοὶ ἔλεγον ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ· *‘οὐαὶ ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναόν, σώσον σεαυτόν.’* Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις· ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω τὸ γένος τὸ στρεβλὸν καὶ πονηρόν, ἐγὼ κρινῶ καὶ ἐλέγξω καὶ αἰσχύνῃς πολλῆς καὶ τιμωρίας ἐμπλήσω, διότι καὶ μετάνοιαν ἔδωκα αὐτοῖς, καὶ οὐ προσέσχον μοι.

Ἐγὼ τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ Κάϊν καὶ Σήθ οἷς ἔδωκα διορίαν ἐτῶν ἵνα μετανοήσωσιν καὶ οὐ προσεσχόν μοι, ἐγὼ τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ ἐκδίκησιν καὶ εἰς τούτους ἐργάσομαι· καὶ τοὺς σοδομίτας οἱ ἐμίαναν τὸν ἀέρα καὶ τὴν γῆν τῇ δυσωδίᾳ αὐτῶν, ἐγὼ ἐνέπρησα καὶ πάλιν ἐμπρήσω, διότι ἀπεστράφησαν τὴν ἡδονὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ ἡγάπησαν τὴν ἡδονὴν τοῦ διαβόλου.

Ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω [p. 84] τοὺς μοιχοὺς καὶ ἄφρονες, τοὺς ἐσκοτισμένους, τοὺς ἵππους τοὺς δηλυμανεῖς, τοὺς μὴ ἀρκουμένους τῶν ἰδίων γυναικῶν, ἀλλὰ πορευομένους δι’ ἔνδειαν φρενῶν κεχαλινομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον τοῦ πυρός· οὐκ ἀκούουσιν, *Φοβερόν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας Θεοῦ ζῶντος*, οὐ πτοοῦνται. Ἐγὼ τὸ ἐμβρίμημά μου ἀποτελέσω εἰς αὐτούς· μετάνοιαν δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν.

Καταλάβω καὶ τοὺς κλέπτας οἱ καὶ φόνους εἰργάσαντο καὶ πολλὰ δεινὰ ἐποίησαν. Ἐγὼ τάρταρώσω πάντας τοὺς πλείστα κακὰ πράξαντας καὶ μὴ μετανοήσαντας· ἐγὼ δείξω αὐτοῖς πῶς δεῖ Θεῷ ὑπέικειν καὶ τοῖς προστάγμασιν αὐτοῦ. Πᾶσιν τούτοις μετάνοιαν δέδωκα καὶ οὐ προσέσχον αὐτήν. Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐργασία αὐτῶν; Ἐπεὶ οὖν οὐκ ἐφύλαξαν ἣν δέδωκα αὐτοῖς μετάνοιαν, ἀλλὰ παρελογίσαντό μοι, αἰσχύνῃς πληρώσω αὐτοὺς καὶ πικρίας καὶ ὀδύνῃς καὶ καύσεως· τὸν ἄσωτον υἱὸν δέδωκα αὐτοῖς τύπον καὶ ὑπογραμμὸν καὶ ἐτέρους πλείονας

my Father, who dared to reduce my paraclete Spirit to a created thing. Woe to them and the punishment that awaits them.

I will reveal myself to the Jews, who crucified me and did not believe. To me was given authority, honor, and power.<sup>7</sup> I will judge fairly. They were saying at the cross, *Ah, you who would destroy the Temple, save yourself.*<sup>8</sup> *Revenge is mine; I will repay*<sup>9</sup> the twisted and wicked race, I will judge and examine and fill them with great shame and punishment, because even though I gave them [chances] to repent, they did not pay heed to me.

I, even I will also take my revenge upon them—the offspring of Cain and Seth, to whom I gave years to repent, and who paid no heed to me.<sup>10</sup> And the sodomites, who defiled the air and the earth with their foul smell, I burned and I will burn them again, because they turned away from the pleasure of the Holy Spirit and loved the pleasure of the devil.

*I will take vengeance*<sup>11</sup> [p.84] on the adulterers and the senseless, those who are blinded [by passion], *the lusty stallions*,<sup>12</sup> those who are not satisfied with their own wives but who march into the abyss of fire<sup>13</sup> bridled by Satan due to the lack of a [sound] mind. They do not hear [Paul saying], *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*,<sup>14</sup> they do not quake. I will take out my indignation on them. I gave them [a chance for] repentance, but they did not repent.

I will also convict the thieves who committed murders and did many terrible things. I will cast into Tartaros all those who perpetrated the most evil things and did not repent. I will show them how to comply with God and his commandments. I offered repentance to all of them but they did not pay attention. Where is their profit? Because they did not guard the repentance I gave them, but they contemned me, I will refill them with shame, and bitterness, and distress, and burning. I gave them the prodigal son<sup>15</sup> as a model and example along

7 See Daniel 7:14.

8 Mark 15:29–30.

9 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

10 See Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30; Revelation 19:2.

11 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

12 Jeremiah 5:8.

13 See Revelation 9:1–2.

14 Hebrews 10:31.

15 See Luke 15:11–32.

ἵνα μὴ ἀπογινώσκωσιν, αὐτοὶ δὲ κατεφρόνησαν τῶν ἐντολῶν μου καὶ ἠρνήσαντό με· ἐμὲ ἀπεστράφησαν καὶ τὴν ἄσωτείαν ἠγάπησαν· ἐμὲ ἐβδελύξαντο καὶ ἐδούλωσαν ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ· λοιπὸν πορευέσθωσαν ἐν τῇ φλογὶ ἣν ἐξέκαυσαν.

Ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς μνησικάκους τελευτήσαντας ταραχῇ δεινῇ παραδώσω, διότι εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν οὐκ ἠγάπησαν, ἀλλ' ὀργίλως τὸν βίον ἑαυτῶν ἐν πικρίᾳ καὶ θυμῷ ἐδαπάνησαν. Ἐγὼ τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἔτοιμός εἰμι, διότι αἰσχύνθησαν καὶ οὐ κατενύγησαν· ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς πλεονέκτας καὶ τοὺς τοκιστὰς καὶ τοὺς τὴν φιλαργυρίαν ποιοῦντας τὴν δευτέραν εἰδωλολατρείαν ἀφανίσω καὶ συντελέσω εἰς αὐτοὺς πᾶσαν τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ ἐκδίκησιν, διότι ἔθεντο τὴν ἐλπίδα αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ χρυσίον, ἐμὲ δὲ ἀπώσαντο ὡς μὴ φροντίζοντα αὐτῶν. Ἐγὼ καταλείψομαι καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας Χριστιανούς ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ τοὺς φάσκοντας ὅτι μετεμψύχως γίνεται· ἅπαντας τούτους ὥσει κηρὸν ἐν γένει διαλύσω καὶ ἐν πυρὶ ἀποτεφρώσω καὶ τότε δεῖξω αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀνάστασιν τῶν νεκρῶν.

Μάγοι δὲ καὶ φαρμακοὶ καὶ ἀστεροσκοπευταὶ καὶ μαντευόμενοι συντριβήσονται συνθλασμῷ βιαίῳ, καὶ λικμηθήσονται εἰς ἀφανισμόν. Καὶ τοὺς τὸν οἶνον πίνοντας μετὰ κιθαρῶν καὶ τυμπάνων ὀλέσω καὶ καταβάλω εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον. Ἐμὲ ἠθέτησαν, ἐμοὶ ἢ ἐκδίκησις. Ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω ὡς δίκαιος· οὐαὶ δὲ τοῖς τραγωδοῦσιν καὶ ὀρχουμένοις καὶ αἰσχρολογοῦσιν καὶ τοὺς μεγάλως φανταζομένους, οἱ μετὰ τῆς σκιάς αὐτῶν παίζουσιν. Ἐγὼ δικαίως καὶ ἀπροσωπολήπτως πυρώσω αὐτοὺς εἰς καθαρὸν· ἐκάλεσα καὶ οὐκ [p. 85] ὑπήκουσαν, ἀλλ' ἐμυκτήριζόν μοι· καταφάγεται ὡς σκώληξ τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν· ἔθηκα γὰρ πᾶσιν ἔλεον καὶ μετάνοιαν καὶ οὐδεὶς μοι προσέσχεν.

Τοὺς δὲ τὰς θείας γραφὰς ἐξουθενοῦντας, ἃς τὸ πνεῦμα μου ἐξέχεεν διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων μου, τῇ ὁμίλῃ κατὰξω· καὶ ὅτι τὰς ἐντολάς μου ἐμυκτήρισαν καὶ ἐξεγέλασαν, ἐκγελάσομαι αὐτούς, καὶ αἰσχύνης πλήσας τῷ πυρὶ παραδώσω· οἱ δὲ τὰς γοητείας ὡς ἱατρὸν ἐπισπώμενοι καὶ τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχουσιν εἰς μάχαιραν καὶ ἀξίνην καὶ εἰς τὰ δρέπανα αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς ἑτερά τινα, ἐρευνήσω ἕκαστον αὐτῶν καὶ τότε γνώσονται ὅτι

with many others so that they would not despair, but they looked down upon my commandments and denied me; they turned away from me and loved licentiousness. They loathed me and they made themselves slaves to sin; let them then march toward the flame that they have lit.

And upon those who died bearing malice I will deliver a terrible agitation, because they did not love my peace, but irascibly wasted their lives in bitterness and anger. I am ready to pay them back, because they felt shame but were not moved to contrition. I will also obliterate the greedy and usurers and those who make avarice a second idolatry;<sup>16</sup> and I will carry out on them my full revenge, since they placed their hope in gold but thrust me aside as if I had not provided for them. I will also abandon the Christians who say there is no resurrection of the dead and those who assert that a transmigration of souls occurs. All these I will dissolve like a candle in Gehenna; in fire I will reduce them to ashes, and then I will show them the resurrection of the dead.

Magicians and sorcerers and astrologers and soothsayers will be crushed in a violent gnashing and will be pulverized into annihilation. And those who drink wine along with string instruments and drums<sup>17</sup> I will destroy and I will throw down into the abyss. They rejected me; *revenge is mine. I will take revenge*<sup>18</sup> as a righteous one. Woe to those who sing and dance and use foul language and perceive themselves as great, those who play with their own shadow [i.e., are conceited]. I will justly and impartially *burn them to bring about purity*.<sup>19</sup> I called and they did not [p. 85] obey, but sneered at me. The worm will devour their hearts.<sup>20</sup> I offered mercy and [a chance for] repentance to all of them and nobody paid heed to me.

Those who set no value upon the divine scriptures, which my spirit poured forth through the mouth of my saints, I will bring down to the fog. And because they sneered and laughed at my commandments, I will laugh at them, and having filled them with shame, I will deliver them to the fire. Those who pursue witchcraft like a doctor, and lay their hope in the knife and the axe and their sickles and in certain other things—I will examine each one of them and then they will know that it was

16 See Colossians 3:5.

17 See Isaiah 5:12.

18 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

19 Isaiah 1:25.

20 For the worm see Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:48.

χρεία ἦν ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ ἐλπίζειν καὶ μὴ εἰς τὰ ποιήματα αὐτοῦ. Ἐμοὶ ἀντιτάσσεσθε καὶ ἀντιπράττετε ἰσχὺν μὴ ἔχοντες; Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω.

Τοὺς δὲ βασιλεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας τοὺς αἰὶ παραπικραίνοντας τῇ ἀδικίᾳ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἀνταποδώσω· ἔκριναν γὰρ ἀνομίαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἐν ὑπερηφανείᾳ καὶ ἐξουδενώσει· ἀδικήσαντες ἀνθρώπους ἔλαβον δῶρα καὶ μετέστησαν τὸ δίκαιον εἰς ἀδικίαν, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐχ οὕτως· τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν κράτος δῶρα οὐ λήψεται· λοιπὸν κατὰ τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν ἀφανίσω αὐτοὺς ὡς Κύριος καὶ Θεός· τότε γινώσκονται ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ φοβερός καὶ ἀφαιρούμενος πνεύματα ἀρχόντων· τότε συνήσουσιν ὅτι φοβερός εἰμι παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν τῆς γῆς. Οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ κολάσει τῇ μενούσῃ αὐτοῖς· ἔβρυξαν γὰρ τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξέχεαν αἷμα ἀδάκρυτον, αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν καὶ τῶν θυγατέρων μου.

Ποῖα ὀργὴ παραδώσω τοὺς μισθωτοὺς καὶ οὐ ποιμένας, οἱ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα μου διέφθειραν καὶ τὰ πρόβατά μου διεσκόρπισαν, οἱ χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον ἐποίμαναν, καὶ ὡς ἀξίως τὸ ἱερατεῖον ἐξεζήτησαν; Πόση τῶν τοιούτων ἡ κόλασις, ἡλικὸς αὐτῶν ὁ ὀδυρμός. Ἐγὼ ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου καὶ ἐν τῷ θυμῷ μου ταράξω αὐτούς. Πρόβατα καὶ βόας ἐκτήσαντο φθειρόμενα καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πρόβατα οὐκ ἐπεμελήθησαν, ἐπισκέψομαι ἐν ῥάβδῳ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐν μάστιγι τὰς ἀδικίας αὐτῶν. Τοὺς δὲ γελοιάζοντας ἱερεῖς καὶ φιλονικούντας ἐν ταῖς ἀγίαις μου ἐκκλησίαις, τί οὐ ποιήσω; Πυρὶ δαμάσω, τартάρῳ βυθίσω, καὶ ὡς σκεύη κεραμέως συνθλάσω αὐτούς. Ἐγὼ μὲν ἤξω τὴν κρίσιν μου ἐπιφέρων· ἐγὼ ἤλθον καὶ γε ἔρχομαι· ὅς δὲ εὗρεν ἰσχὺν ἀπαντήσατω πρὸς με· οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἐν ἀνομίαις εἰς χεῖράς μου ἐμπεσόντι, ἔκαστος οὖν πρὸς με ἤξει γυμνός καὶ τετραχλησμένος· ποῦ τότε φανήσεται ἡ ἀναίδεια αὐτῶν, πῶς ὀφθήσεται αὐτοῖς τὸ πρόσωπόν μου; Ποῦ δὲ ἡ ἐντροπὴ αὐτῶν; Ἐντραπήσονται [p. 86] γὰρ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀχράντων μου δυνάμεων.

necessary to put one's hope in God and not in his creations. Do you resist me and oppose me even though you have no power? *Mine is the revenge; I will repay [them].*<sup>21</sup>

And I will repay those kings and the rulers who rebel against my name through injustice. In arrogance and contempt, they chose lawlessness and injustice. Having received bribes, they wronged people and changed what was right into injustice—but I am not like that. My might will not be bribed. As Lord and God, I will obliterate them according to their wickedness. Then they will come to know that I am the one *who causes fear and who cuts off the spirits of the rulers*. Then they will understand that I am *the one who causes fear among the kings of the earth*.<sup>22</sup> Woe to them and the punishment that awaits them. *For they gnashed their teeth*<sup>23</sup> *and they spilled innocent blood, blood of my sons and my daughters*.<sup>24</sup>

With what anger will I deliver those who were hired hands and not shepherds,<sup>25</sup> those who destroyed my vineyard and scattered my sheep, those who shepherded pieces of gold and silver and demanded the priesthood as if they deserved it? How great will be their punishment, how great their lamentation! In my wrath and in my anger I will trouble them.<sup>26</sup> They acquired perishable sheep and cattle, yet they did not take care of my sheep. *I will visit their lawlessness with a rod and with scourges their offenses*.<sup>27</sup> And the priests who make jokes or are contentious in my holy churches, what will I not do to them? I will tame them with fire, I will send them down to Tartaros, and I will crush them together like the *potter's vessels*.<sup>28</sup> I will come bringing my judgment. I came and will come again.<sup>29</sup> Whoever finds the strength, let him oppose me. Woe to him who in wickedness falls into my hands, for each one will come to me *naked and laid bare*.<sup>30</sup> Where then will their shamelessness come to light? How will they behold my countenance? Where will their shame be? For they will be put to shame [p. 86] in front of my undefiled [= angelic] powers.

21 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

22 Psalm 75 (76):13.

23 Psalm 34 (35):16.

24 Psalm 105 (106):38.

25 See John 10:12.

26 See Psalm 2:5.

27 Psalm 88 (89):33.

28 Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27.

29 See John 14:28.

30 Hebrews 4:13.

Καταλάβω δὲ καὶ τοὺς μονάζοντας, οἵτινες ἐν πολλῇ ἀμελείᾳ πορευόμενοι ἐψεύσαντο καὶ Θεῷ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις, ἕτερα γὰρ συνταξάμενοι, ἀνθ' ἕτερα εἰργάσαντο. Ἐγὼ τούτους ἀγκιστρεύσω καὶ τινάξω ὥσπερ ἀέρα ἐκ νεφελῶν, καὶ τῇ ἀβύσσῳ παραπέμψω· οὐκ ἀρκέσθη δὲ τούτοις ἡ ἰδία ἀπώλεια, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑτέροις σκάνδαλον ἀπωλείας ἐγένοντο, κενοδοξία τὸ πλεῖστον διαφθείραντες. Ἀγαθὸν ἦν αὐτοῖς μὴ ἀποτάξασθαι, ἢ ἀποταξαμένους, καὶ αἰσχρῶς βιώσαντας πάλιν τῇ ἀσωτίᾳ συμφυραθῆναι. Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω τοὺς μὴ θελήσαντας μετανοῆσαι καὶ κρίνω ὡς δίκαιος κριτής.”

83. Ταῦτα λέγοντος τοῦ Κυρίου πρὸς Μιχαὴλ τὸν ἀρχάγγελον, τρόμος ἔλαβεν πάσας τὰς ἀπείρους ἐκείνας τῶν ἀγγέλων δυνάμεις· ἔπειτα προσέταξεν ἐνεχθῆναι αὐτῷ τοὺς ἑπτὰ αἰῶνας τῆς συστάσεως κόσμου. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ Μιχαὴλ προσετάγη τοῦ κομίσει αὐτούς. Παραχρῆμα δὲ πορευθεὶς ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς διαθήκης οἶκον ἤνεγκεν αὐτούς ὥσπερ βιβλίους εὐμεγέθεις ὑπάρχοντας, καὶ τέθεικεν πρὸ προσώπου Κυρίου μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου παριστάμενος, καὶ σκοπῶν πῶς ἀναπτύξει τὰ ἐχόμενα βιβλία<sup>b</sup> τῶν αἰώνων καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς γεγραμμένα. Λαβὼν δὲ ὁ Κύριος τὸν πρῶτον αἰῶνα καὶ ἀναπτύξας λέγει· “Ἐνθάδε ἀναγέγραπται ἐν πρώτοις οὕτως· Πατήρ, Υἱός, Πνεῦμα ἅγιον εἰς Θεὸς ἐν τρισὶ τοῖς προσώποις, ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐγεννήθη ὁ Υἱός, δημιουργὸς τῶν αἰώνων· τῷ λόγῳ γὰρ τοῦ Πατρὸς οἱ αἰῶνες παρήχθησαν, τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Πατρὸς αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐδημιουργήθησαν, τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Πατρὸς οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν, γῆ τε πᾶσα καὶ τὰ καταχθόνια, θάλασσαι καὶ ποταμοί, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς· τῷ Πνεύματι δὲ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν.”

Καὶ μετέπειτα μικρὸν τοῦ βιβλίου ἐξελθὼν, λέγει· “Ὡδε γέγραπται εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ σὺν τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ Εὕα”. παρεβίβασεν δὲ μικρὸν τοῦ βιβλίου καὶ φησὶν· “Ἐντολὴν Θεοῦ Παντοκράτορος καὶ Δημιουργοῦ ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων· ἐδόθη τῷ Ἀδὰμ τοῦτος ὁ νόμος καὶ τήρησις καὶ ἀσφάλεια πρὸς ἀκρίβειαν μνήμης Θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐννοιολογεῖσθαι

I will also convict the monastics who conducted their lives with great negligence and lied to God and to angels and to men, for they promised one thing and instead did something else. I will hook them and shake them like wind from clouds and I will send them to the abyss. They were not satisfied with their own perdition but became a snare for the perdition of others, corrupting for the most part through vainglory. It would have been better for them not to have renounced [the world] rather than to have renounced it and live shamefully and once again become involved with licentiousness. *Mine is the revenge; I will take vengeance*<sup>31</sup> on those who did not want to repent, and I judge as a fair judge.”

83. Because of the Lord's words to Michael the archangel, terror overtook the countless heavenly forces. Then the Lord ordered to be brought to him the seven aeons of the composition of the world. Michael was ordered to fetch them, and he immediately marched to the house of the covenant. And he brought them—they looked like sizeable books—and placed them before the Lord, standing in fear and trembling and considering how he would ponder on the following books of the aeons and what is written in them. The Lord, having taken the first aeon and opened it, said, “Here it is recorded, first of all: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, one God in three persons, from the Father was begotten the Son, the creator of the aeons. For through the word of the Father the aeons were produced, through the word of the Father the forces of heavens were created, *through the word of the Father the heavens were made firm*,<sup>32</sup> and all the earth and the underworld, seas and rivers, and everything that is in them. *By the breath of his mouth all their [=heavens'] host [was made firm]*.”<sup>33</sup>

And thereafter, having proceeded a little further with the reading of the book, he said, “Here it has been written [that] the first man Adam and his wife Eve are the image of the invisible God.”<sup>34</sup> He then read a little more of the book and said, “A commandment of God, the Ruler of All and Creator of all things visible and invisible. This law, its observance, and its assurance were given to Adam so that he could have an exact memory of God and bear in his mind the knowledge that God

31 Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30. See also Deuteronomy 32:35.

32 Psalm 32 (33):6.

33 Psalm 32 (33):6.

34 See Colossians 1:15.

b Word added from P<sup>1</sup>.

αὐτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν Θεὸς ὑπεράνω αὐτοῦ.” Πάλιν δὲ μικρὸν ὑπερβάς λέγει. “Παράβασις ἦν παρέβη ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου ἀπατηθεῖσα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀπὸ ῥαθυμίας καὶ ὀλιγωρίας ἰδίας πεσὼν ἐξεβλήθει ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου κρίσει δικαίᾳ [p. 87] καὶ ψήφῳ Θεοῦ διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶναι μέσον τοσούτων ἀγαθῶν τὸν ἀχρεῖον παραβάτην.” πάλιν δὲ προβὰς φησίν. “Ἀνέστη Κάιν ἐπὶ Ἀβελ καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτὸν βουλήσει διαβόλου· ὀφείλει πυρὶ γεέννης τεφρωθῆναι διὰ τὸ ἀμετανόητον εἶναι αὐτόν. Ἀβελ δὲ ζήσεται εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.” Καὶ μικρὸν προβὰς λέγει. “Πρόσωπον εὐλογίας Σήθ, καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν ἀγιασμοῦ Ἐνὼς· προτύπωσις δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ἀναλήψεως Ἐνὼχ.” Εἰς τὸ τέλος δὲ τοῦ βιβλίου ἐλθὼν λέγει. “Βίβλος αἰῶνος πρώτου ἐνταῦθα τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πράξαντων διὰ προσκαίρου ζωῆς. Ἀναγράφεται ὁ θάνατος καὶ ἡ ζωὴ, ἡ ἀνομία μετὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἡ ταπείνωσις καὶ ἡ ἔπαρσις, δοθήσεται δὲ ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.”

Τῷ ὁμοίῳ οὖν τρόπῳ ἐξηλθεν τὰς ἐξ βίβλους τῶν αἰώνων· κρατήσας δὲ καὶ τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ αἰῶνος, φησίν. “Ἀρχὴ ἐβδόμου αἰῶνος, τέλος αἰώνων, ἀρχὴ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας, ἀρχὴ κνιπείας καὶ ἀσπλαγχνίας.” καὶ προβὰς λέγει. “Οἱ ἄνθρωποι τοῦ ἐβδόμου αἰῶνος, πονηροί, φθονεροί, ψεύσται, ψεκτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, φίλαρχοι καὶ τῇ σοδομιτικῇ πορνείᾳ δεδουλωμένοι.” πάλιν προβὰς μικρὸν τῆς βίβλου καὶ ἀναπτύξας, ἀνῆκεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἄνω καὶ τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἴδιον μέτωπον τύψας καὶ καλύψας τὸ μέτωπον σὺν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἔστη ἐπὶ ὥραν ἱκανήν· ὥσπερ ἀνανοησάμενος λέγει. “Ἀληθῶς ὑπερέβη ὁ ἐβδόμος οὗτος αἰὼν τῇ ἀδικίᾳ καὶ πονηρίᾳ τοὺς ὀπισθεν ἐξ αἰῶνας.”

Πάλιν δὲ μικρὸν διελθὼν τοῦ βιβλίου λέγει. “Ἕλληνες καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα αὐτῶν συνετρίβησαν ξύλῳ καὶ λόγχῃ καὶ ἥλους, ἃ ἐνεπάγησαν εἰς τὸν ἐμὸν ἄρτον τὸν ζωηφόρον.” Καὶ μικρὸν ἡσυχάσας αὐθις ἔκυψεν εἰς τὴν βίβλον τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ φησίν.

is above him.” And having advanced a little further he said, “[Here is] the transgression that the image of the invisible God committed because he had been deceived, or rather, because of his own laziness and negligence. He was cast out of paradise through a fair judgment [p. 87] and a decree of God, so that the useless transgressor not remain in the middle of so many blessed things.”<sup>35</sup> Again he read further and said, “Cain rose up against Abel and killed him according to the will of the devil.<sup>36</sup> He should be burned to ashes in the fire of Gehenna, since he did not repent. Abel, however, will live into the ages.” He advanced a little and said, “Seth is the face of blessing and Enos is the image of sanctification;<sup>37</sup> Enoch is a prefiguration of my ascension.”<sup>38</sup> Having arrived at the end of the book, he said, “Here [is] the book of the first aeon of humankind, of those who acted in it throughout [their] ephemeral life. Death and life, lawlessness along with justice, and humility and arrogance have all been recorded; to each will be given according to their deeds.”

Then in a similar way he proceeded with the other six books of the aeons. Holding the book of the [seventh] aeon, he said, “The beginning of the seventh aeon, the end of aeons, the beginning of evil and wickedness, the beginning of miserliness and heartlessness.” And having read further, he said, “The people of the seventh aeon, wicked, envious, liars, having a blameworthy love, [are] fond of power, and enslaved in sodomitic harlotry.” After he read a bit further and ruminated, he raised up his eyes, struck his own forehead with his hand, covered his forehead and eyes, and stood [like that] for quite some time. Then, as if collecting himself, he said, “Truly, this seventh aeon surpassed in injustice and wickedness the previous six aeons.”

And again having gone through the book a little further, he said, “The pagans and their idols were shattered by the wood and the lance and the nails, which were driven through my life-bringing bread.” After being quiet for a bit he bent over the book of the

35 See Genesis 1–3.

36 Cain and Abel were the first and second sons of Adam and Eve, respectively; see Genesis 4:1–16.

37 Seth was the third son of Adam and Eve; Enos was the son of Seth; see Genesis 4:25–26.

38 According to Genesis 5:24: “Enoch was well pleasing to God, and he was not found, because God transferred him.”

“Δώδεκα ἄρχοντες τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, λευκοὶ ὡς τὸ φῶς, οἱ ἐτάραξαν τὴν θάλασσαν, οἱ ἐστόμωσαν θηρία,<sup>c</sup> οἱ δράκοντας ἀπέπνιξαν, τυφλοὺς ὡδήγησαν, πεινῶντας ἐνέπλησαν, καὶ πλουτοῦντας ἐκένωσαν, ἰχθύας<sup>d</sup> ἡγικίστρευσαν καὶ θείως ἀνεζώωσαν, πολὺς ὁ μισθὸς αὐτῶν.”

Μικρὸν δὲ ὑπερβὰς λέγει· “Ἐξελεξάμην ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ μάρτυρας ἐμοί, ἡ φιλία αὐτῶν ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτῶν ἕως τοῦ θρόνου μου, ὁ πόθος αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν καρδίαν μου, τὸ φίλτρον αὐτῶν καίει με διαπρυσίως· ἡ δόξα μου οὖν καὶ τὸ κράτος μου μετ’ αὐτῶν.” Κατελθὼν δὲ πάλιν πλεῖστον τῆς βίβλου καὶ ὥσπερ μειδιάσας λέγει· “Ἀνθρωπος κρατήσας εὐσεβῶς τὸν οἶακα τῆς Ἑπταλόφου καὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἡγησάμενος θεράπων τῆς ἐμῆς ἀγάπης εὐρέθη, ὃ πρέπει ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, ζηλωτῇ καὶ μιμητῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.” Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα καταλιπὼν λέγει· “Νύμφη [p. 88] μου περικαλλὴς ὡραία τε τιμημένη, ἣν πολλοὶ κάπηλοι ἐσπούδασαν καπηλεῦσαι καὶ πόρνην ἀναδείξαι· ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ τὸν ἴδιον ἐραστὴν οὐκ ἡθέτησας. Αἱρέσεις πολυποίκιλοι ἐπὶ σὲ ἐκορυφώθησαν, ἀλλ’ ἡ πέτρα οὐκ ἐσαλεύθη, ἐν ᾗ σε ἐθεμελίωσα, οὐδόλως γὰρ αὐτῆς οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αἱ πύλαι τοῦ Ἄιδου.”

Ταῦτα εἰρηκῶς καὶ μετέπειτα διελθὼν, ἐλάλησεν καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν, πῶς ἐκεῖ ἔκειντο οἱ λόγοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ τε πονηροί, οἳ τε ἀγαθοὶ σεσημειωμένοι, ὅσα ὁ θάνατος συνέκλεισεν τῇ μετανοίᾳ οὐκ ἐξαλείφθησαν· εἶχεν δὲ ἡ βίβλος πρότερον τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἔπειτα αἱ ἀνομίαι γεγραμμέναι αὐτῇ ὥσει ψάμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, ἃς διερχόμενος ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς τῇ ἀναγνώσει, πυκνὰ συνέσειεν τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ στενάζων ἐβαρεῖτο· εἰστήκει δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τὸ φοβερὸν ἐκεῖνο τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐξεστῆκώς σφόδρα καὶ τρέμων ἀπὸ φόβου καὶ<sup>e</sup> τῆς τῶν αἰώνων ἀναγνώσεως. “Ὅτε δὲ ἀπέδωκεν καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν αἰῶνα ὡς τοῦ μεσασμοῦ αὐτοῦ, πάλιν λέγει· “Πολλὴν δυσωδίαν περιέχει ἀπὸ ἀμαρτιῶν τὸ ἔσχατον βιβλίον τοῦτο, διὰ τοῦτο μεσάσω αὐτὸ καὶ ἀρκεῖ. Ὑπάρχει γὰρ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον αὐτοῦ πλήρης καπνοῦ καὶ δυσωδίας, πλήρης φόνου καὶ ψεύδους, πλήρης ἔχθρας καὶ μνησικακίας ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἀπλῶς πλήρης ἀκαθαρσίας ὑπάρχει. Διὰ τοῦτο μεσασμῷ συντελέσω αὐτὸ καὶ κόψω τῆς δυσώδους ἀμαρτίας εἰς τέλος.”

[seventh] aeon and said, “Twelve rulers of the great king, white as the light, they who agitated the sea, who muzzled wild beasts, who choked dragons, guided the blind, satisfied the hungry, stripped the wealthy, caught fish and divinely returned them to life, their reward will be plentiful.”<sup>39</sup>

And having advanced a little further, he said, “I, the beloved, have elected for myself martyrs, whose friendship reaches up to the sky, and their love up to my throne, and their desire up to my heart, their love inflames me intensely; my glory and my power [are] with them.” After rereading a good part of the book, he seemed to be smiling, and said, “A man who piously held the rudder of the Seven-hilled [city]<sup>40</sup> and led the kingdom was found to be a servant of my love; he, a zealous follower and imitator of Christ, deserves the kingdom of heaven.” And after these words, having put down [the book], he said, “My bride [p. 88], beautiful, lovely, and honored, whom many swindlers were eager to corrupt and proclaim a whore. But you did not reject me, your own lover. Manifold heresies were raised up against you, but the rock on which I placed your foundations was not shaken, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”<sup>41</sup>

After saying this and going through [more of the book], he talked about sinners, how in [the book] were recorded the words of humans, both the wicked and the good, and which words death shut off and were not wiped out through repentance. The book contained first the [good] works of humankind; then their sins were written in it, as great as the sand of the sea. As the Lord Jesus went through reading them, he often shook his head and sighed with weariness. And that terrible multitude of angels stood in great amazement trembling with fear and from the reading [of the books of] the aeons. As he reached the middle of this same aeon, he said again, “This last book contains much stench from sins. That is why I will reach the middle and that is enough. The human affairs in it are full of smoke and stench, full of murder and lies, full of enmity and the remembrance of injuries, and simply full of filth. That is why I will finish in the middle and I will cut short [the reading of] this malodorous sin altogether.”

c Rystenko has θῆρας.

d Rystenko has χώρας. The variant reading is from M.

e Rystenko omits ἀγγέλων ἐξεστῆκώς σφόδρα καὶ τρέμων ἀπὸ φόβου καί. The addition is found in M and P<sup>1</sup>.

39 A reference to the twelve apostles.

40 A reference to Constantinople.

41 See Matthew 16:18. Christ refers here to the church.

84. Ταῦτα εἰρηκῶς ὁ Κύριος ἀπεκίνησεν Μιχαὴλ τὸν ἀρχιστράτηγον ὡς ἐπὶ κρίσιν. Ἐξῆλθε δὲ παραχρῆμα Μιχαὴλ σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ, κατέχων καὶ τὸν ἀφραστον θρόνον μετ' αὐτοῦ. Τὸ δὲ τάγμα αὐτοῦ πολὺ ὄν, ἡ γῆ οὐκ ἐξήρκει χωρῆσαι αὐτό, πορευόμενοι δὲ ἔλεγον· “Ἅγιος, ἅγιος, φοβερός, μέγας, ὑψηλός, θαυμαστός, δεδοξασμένος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.” παραχρῆμα δὲ ἀπεστάλη Γαβριὴλ σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς πορευόμενος, ἤρξαντο βοᾶν· “Ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, Κύριος Σαβαώθ, πλήρης πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.” Ἐκ δὲ τῆς φοβερᾶς φωνῆς ἧς ἐκέκραγον ἐσείετο ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ. Ἀπελύθη καὶ τρίτος ὀπισθεν αὐτῶν φοβερός σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ, ὄνομα δὲ αὐτῷ Ῥαφαήλ, καὶ ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτὸν ἐκέκραξεν λέγων· “Εἷς ἅγιος, εἷς Κύριος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ Πατρὸς, Ἀμήν.”

Τετάρτη δὲ παράταξις ἀπελύθη καὶ ἦν ὁ ἄρχων αὐτῶν λευκὸς ὡσεὶ χιών, θαμβητικός, γλυκὺς τῷ ὄρασθαι αὐτόν· πορευόμενος δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπήρξαντο οὕτως βοᾶν· “Θεὸς θεῶν Κύριος ἐλάλησε καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου μέχρι δυσμῶν. [p. 89] Ἐκ Σιών ἡ εὐπρέπεια τῆς ὠραιότητος αὐτοῦ. Ὁ Θεὸς ἐμφανῶς ἤξει, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ οὐ παρασιωπήσεται. Πῦρ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ προπορεύεται, καὶ κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ καταίγῃ σφόδρα, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς τοῦ ψαλμοῦ. Ἀπεκρίναντο δὲ οἱ μείζονες τοῦ τάγματος καὶ ἔλεγον· “Ἀνάστα, ὁ Θεός, κρίνον τὴν γῆν, ὅτι σὺ κατακληρονομήσεις ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι,<sup>f</sup> καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς τηρήσασιν τὰ σὰ προστάγματα καὶ τὰ σὰ δικαιώματα· εὐλογημένος εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος καθότι ἔρχεσαι κρίναι τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.” Ὑπῆρχεν δὲ τοῦ θείου τάγματος ἐκεῖνος ἀρχηγὸς Οὐριήλ ὡς ἐξαιρετον ὄνομα.

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤχθη πρὸ προσώπου Κυρίου ὁ δεδοξασμένος αὐτοῦ σταυρὸς λάμπων ὡς ἀστραπὴ φοβερά, καὶ ἦν ἡ δόξα αὐτοῦ πολὺ ἐν εὐωδίᾳ σφόδρα σφόδρα· ἤγετο δὲ μέσῳ τῶν δύο ταγμάτων, Ἐξουσιῶν καὶ

84. Having said these words the Lord marshaled Michael, the leader of the heavenly host, to prepare the judgment. Immediately Michael departed along with his battalion, holding fast with him the marvelous throne. His battalion was so large that the earth was not enough to contain it. While marching<sup>42</sup> they were saying, “Holy, holy, fearful, great, sublime, marvelous, glorified unto the ages of ages.” Immediately, Gabriel was dispatched along with his battalion, and while he was marching, they started proclaiming, “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of his glory.*”<sup>43</sup> And from the fearsome sound of their shouting, the sky and the earth shook. Behind them was released the third awesome [archangel] along with his battalion. His name was Raphael and, while marching, he cried aloud, “One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.”<sup>44</sup>

Then the fourth company was released, whose commander was white like snow, astonishing, sweet to look at. As he was marching, they also started proclaiming, “*God of gods, the Lord, spoke and summoned the earth from the sun’s rising even to its setting [p. 89]. Out of Sion is the splendor of his beauty; God will come conspicuously, our God—and he will not pass by in silence; a fire will march before him, and all around him is a mighty tempest*”<sup>45</sup>—as well as the rest of the psalm. And the chiefs of the battalion were responding and were saying, “*Rise up, O God, judge the earth, because you will gain possession of all the nations,*”<sup>46</sup> and of all who have kept your ordinances and your statutes.<sup>47</sup> Blessed are you who are coming, for you are coming to judge the earth and the world in truth and justice.”<sup>48</sup> The chief of this divine battalion was Uriel—that was [his] distinguished name.

After this, his glorified cross, shining like awesome lightning, was brought in front of the Lord and its glory was great in its exceedingly sweet smell. It was

42 See the similar angelic procession in *VBiun* (5.44).

43 Isaiah 6:3. It is also sung at the beginning of the Anaphora. See Trempeles, *Αἱ τρεῖς λειτουργίαι*, 105.

44 This is a hymn sung during the Divine Liturgy, after the elevation of the consecrated bread. See Trempeles, *Αἱ τρεῖς λειτουργίαι*, 131.

45 Psalm 49 (50):1–3.

46 Psalm 81 (82):8. This is sung repeatedly during the vespers of Holy Saturday, *Τριώδιον κατανυκτικόν* (Athens, 1960), 442–43.

47 See Ezekiel 43:11.

48 See Psalm 95 (96):13.

<sup>f</sup> Rystenko has τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς σου. I follow the Septuagint [Psalm 81 (82):8], a reading also found in P<sup>1</sup> and P<sup>2</sup>.

Δυνάμεων ἐν τιμῇ μεγίστη· πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν, ἦν ἰδεῖν φρικτὸν θέαμα· αἱ γὰρ δυνάμεις ἐκεῖναι εἰς πλῆθος ὑπάρχουσαι φόβῳ πολλῷ καὶ τρόμῳ συνεχόμεναι, ἔψαλλον ἐν τῷ κινεῖσθαι αὐτάς καὶ ἔλεγον· “Υψώσω σε ὁ Θεὸς μου, ὁ βασιλεὺς μου, καὶ εὐλογήσω τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.” Ἄλλοι δὲ ἀντεφώνουν καὶ ἔλεγον· “Υψούτε Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν ἡμῶν, καὶ προσκυνεῖτε τῷ ὑποποδίῳ τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἅγιός ἐστιν. Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα.”

85. Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐδόθη κέλευσις θεία ζητοῦσα Μιχαὴλ τὸν ἀρχιστράτηγον, καὶ θάττον εὐρέθη πρὸ προσώπου Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὼς ἐν κραταιότητι. ἕτερος δὲ ἄγγελος ἦλθεν πρὸ προσώπου Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, κατέχων ὥσπερ εἶδος τόξου λευκὸν καὶ ὑπόρροdon, καὶ εἰς τὸ τέλος ἐζωσμένον διέγευσιν· ἦν δὲ ἡ διέγευσιν ἐκείνη ὥσπερ χνοὺς ἡλλοιωμένος, ἔνδον δὲ ὡσεὶ τέφρα νομιζομένη, στερεὰ δὲ σφόδρα· καὶ ἔγραφεν ἐν μὲν τῷ ἔξω μέρει “νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις,” ἔνδον δὲ “κεκοιμημένων εὐσεβῶς ζωή.” Λαβὼν δὲ ὁ Κύριος εἰς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ τὴν διέγευσιν, ἐνεφύσησε τρίς εἰς αὐτὸ καὶ τρεῖς λόγους ἐλάλησεν εἰς αὐτό· ἔδωκεν δὲ αὐτῷ Μιχαὴλ τῷ φοβερῷ ἀγγέλῳ καὶ φησὶν· “Λάβε τὴν σάλπιγγα ταύτην καὶ πορεύθητι ἐν Τόπῳ Κρανίου ἐν ᾧ τὰς ἀχράντους μου χεῖρας ἐξέτεινα, καὶ στὰς σάλπισον ἐπὶ τρεῖς καὶ στῆθι.” Καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν, ἐξέπεμψεν αὐτὸν μετὰ σπουδῆς.

Μετὰ ταῦτα προσεκαλέσατο ἕτερον τάγμα ὃ ἐκαλεῖτο Ἀρχαί, καὶ φησὶν τῷ ἄρχοντι αὐτῶν· “Σοὶ λέγω· παραλαβὼν σου τὸ θεῖον τάγμα ἐπίστηθι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἐν [p. 90] νεφέλαις ἀρπάξης τοὺς ἁγίους ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν καὶ βορρᾶ καὶ νότου καὶ τούτους παραστήσης εἰς ἀπάντησιν τῆς παρουσίας μου ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς σάλπιγγος.” Μετὰ ταῦτα ἔδωκεν σημεῖον δι’ ἀγγέλου ἵνα ἀλλαγῶσι ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ ἀπὸ φθορᾶς εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν, σκοτισθῇ δὲ καὶ ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη· τὰ ἄστρα πεσοῦνται, οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἡ

led in the highest honor between the two battalions, Authorities and Powers.<sup>49</sup> As they were marching, it was a terrible spectacle to behold. The [angelic] powers, of which there were multitudes, afflicted by much fear and trembling, sang as they advanced and were saying, “*I will exalt you, my God, my king, and bless your name forever and forever and ever.*”<sup>50</sup> Others were responding and saying, “*Exalt the Lord our God and do obeisance at the footstool of his feet, because holy is he!*”<sup>51</sup> Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.”

85. After all this a divine command was given asking for Michael, the leader of the heavenly host, who quickly found himself standing firmly before the Lord’s countenance. And another angel came before the Lord God’s countenance, holding firmly a kind of bow, white and rosy, and at its end was fastened a rousing [instrument]. That rousing [instrument] was [on the exterior] like chaff, and inside resembled ashes, and it was exceedingly solid. And on its exterior was written “the resurrection of the dead,” and on the inside “the life of those who have piously fallen asleep.” And the Lord took the rousing instrument in his hands, blew three times into it, and he said three words to it. He gave it to Michael, the mighty angel, and said, “Take this trumpet and go to the *place of the skull*,<sup>52</sup> where I extended my undefiled hands. Stand there, sound the trumpet three times, and wait.” And having said this, he sent him out hastily.

After this he invited a different battalion, which was called Principalities, and he said to their commander, “I tell you: take your divine battalion and stand in the whole world so that [p. 90] you may be able to seize in clouds the saints from the East and the West and the North and the South, and so that you may place them to welcome my advent at the time when the trumpet is sounded.” After these words he signaled through an angel that the sky and the earth should be changed from corruption to incorruptibility, and that the sun and the moon should be

49 See 1 Peter 3:22.

50 Psalm 144 (145):1.

51 Psalm 98 (99):5. This verse is regularly found in vespers, see *Ωρολόγιον τὸ μέγα* (Athens, 1963), 153.

52 Matthew 27:33. This is Golgotha or Calvary, the place of Christ’s crucifixion.

θάλασσα ξηρανθήσονται καὶ πᾶν εἶτι ἐν τῇ γῇ ἐστὶν τελευτήσει.”

Ἐπειτα ἐπέβλεψεν ὁ δίκαιος Κριτὴς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ εἶδε, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀχλὺς καὶ σκότος, θρῆνος καὶ οὐαὶ καὶ κοπετὸς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ πολλῆς τυραννίδος τοῦ Σατανᾶ. Ἐφρυάττετο γὰρ καὶ ἐμαίνετο ὁ δράκων καὶ κατήσθιεν πάντας, συντρίβων ὡς χλόην λαχάνων, μάλιστα ὁρῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐτοιμάζοντας αὐτῷ τὸ αἰώνιον πῦρ. Ὡς οὖν ἔβλεπεν ταῦτα ὁ δίκαιος Κριτὴς, παραχρῆμα ἐκάλεσεν ἓνα τῶν ἀγγέλων ὃς ἦν φλογερός καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ αὐστηρὰ καὶ ἀπότομος μὴ οἰκτείρουσα, ἄρχων δὲ ὑπῆρχεν τῶν εἰς τὸ πῦρ προσεδρευόντων ἀγγέλων, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος: “Πορευθεὶς παράλαβε μεθ’ ἐαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν ῥάβδον μου τὴν συντρίβουσαν καὶ δένουσαν καὶ μυρία πνεύματα τῆς τάξεώς σου τοὺς ὀξύτερους καὶ ἄρχοντας οἱ ἐπὶ τῶν κολάσεων ἐτάχθησαν ὑπηρετεῖν· τούτους λαβὼν ὀδευσον ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν νοητὴν καὶ κατάλαβε τοῦ δράκοντος τὰ ἴχνη καὶ δράξον αὐτὸν ἐν ἰσχύϊ καὶ ἐν κραταιότητι, ἐν ῥάβδῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ, ἔμψησον αὐτὸν ἕως οὗ φέρῃ τὸ τάγμα τῶν ἀκαθάρτων αὐτοῦ πνευμάτων· καὶ τότε δήσας ἅπαντας ἄρδην ἐν τῇ ῥάβδῳ τῆς ἰσχύος μου κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμά μου διασκορπίσας ἐν ταῖς δριμυτέραις κολάσεσιν.” Τοῦτο εἰρηκῶς ὁ Κύριος ἐξαπέστειλεν καὶ αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ζωγῆσαι τὸν ἄρχοντα τοῦ σκότους καὶ ἀπολάβῃ σὺν τοῖς ὑπουργοῖς αὐτοῦ τὸ πῦρ τῆς γεέννης.

**86.** Μετὰ ταῦτα νεῦσις θεία ἄνωθεν ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῷ ἀρχαγγέλῳ τῷ κατέχοντι τὴν θείαν σάλπιγγα ἵνα λοιπὸν σαλπίσῃ, ἄφνω δὲ σιγὴ πολλὴ ἐγένετο τῇ ᾧρα ἐκείνῃ ὡς ἡρεμῆσαι τὰ σύμπαντα· ἐσάλπισεν οὖν πρῶτον καὶ εὐρέθησαν σῶα τὰ σώματα τῶν νεκρῶν· ἐσάλπισεν καὶ δὶς, καὶ ἐπορεύθη πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἐκ τῆς σάλπιγγος, εἰσάγον τὰς ψυχὰς εἰς ἕκαστον σκῆνωμα αὐτῶν. Θάμβος δὲ καὶ φόβος περιέσχεν τὰ πάντα ἐκ τῶν ἡχῶν<sup>g</sup> τῆς σάλπιγγος καὶ ἔτρεμον τὰ ἄνω καὶ τὰ κάτω καὶ ἔφριττον διὰ παντός· ἐσάλπισεν δὲ καὶ τὸ τρίτον φοβερώτερον ὥστε σκιρτῆσαι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ τοῦ [p. 91] φόβου καὶ ἠγέρθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν μνημάτων ὡς ἐν

darkened. *The stars will fall, the rivers and the sea will dry up, and everything that is on the earth will die.*<sup>53</sup>

Then the just Judge observed the earth and saw, and, behold, mist and darkness, lament and woe and wailing among men from the great tyranny of Satan. For the dragon was prancing and raging and eating everybody, crushing [them] like shoots of vegetables, especially when he saw the angels of God preparing the eternal fire for him.<sup>54</sup> When the just Judge saw this, he immediately summoned one of the angels. The angel was flaming and his countenance was harsh and severe and showed no compassion, and he was the commander of the angels who administered the fire. The Lord said to him, “Go and take with you my staff that shatters and binds, as well as countless spirits of your order and the swiftest leaders who were appointed to serve in the punishments. And once you have gathered them, travel to the noetic sea and find the traces of the dragon and catch it through power and strength, through a blow of the staff, and burn it until it brings forth the battalion of its impure spirits. And then, having bound them all at once by the staff of my power, scatter them according to my command to the fiercest of the punishments.” Saying this the Lord sent him forth to capture the ruler of darkness so that he [=Satan] along with his servants might receive the fire of Gehenna.

**86.** After this, a divine signal from above was given to the archangel holding the divine trumpet to finally sound it, and it suddenly became very silent at that hour,<sup>55</sup> as if the world stood still. Then, at the first sound of the trumpet the bodies of the dead were found intact.<sup>56</sup> He sounded the trumpet for the second time and the spirit of the Lord proceeded from the trumpet, bringing the souls into each one’s body. Because of the sounds of the trumpet, amazement and fear encompassed everything, and those above and those below shuddered continually. And he sounded the trumpet for the third time, which was much more terrifying, so that the sky and the earth leaped from [p. 91] fear, and the dead were raised from

53 Mark 13:24; Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:10. See also the seven trumpets in Revelation 8–10.

54 For the fight between angels and the dragon see also Revelation 12:7–10.

55 See Revelation 8:1.

56 See 1 Corinthians 15:51–52.

g Rystenko has ἀγγῶν, which does not make logical sense.

ρίπῃ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ὧν τὸ διήγημα, ἀδελφοί, φρικτὸν καὶ τοῦ λαλήσαι, ὑπερέβαλλον γὰρ καὶ τῆς γῆς τὸν χοῦν ἐν τῷ ἐστάναι αὐτούς, ὥσπερ δὲ ποικίλη βροχή, οὕτως ἐκατέρχοντο τὰ τάγματα τῶν ταγμάτων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τῆς ἐτοιμασίας, κράζοντες ἐν ἰσχύϊ καὶ λέγοντες: “Ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, Κύριος Σαβαώθ, πλήρης πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τοῦ φόβου καὶ τοῦ τρόμου”. εἰστήκει δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς καὶ τὸ ἀναρίθμητον σύνταγμα ἄνω βλέπον, ἔτρεμον δὲ καὶ ἔφριττον τὴν φοβερὰν ἐκείνην ἐξουσίαν τὴν ἐπὶ γῆς κατερχομένην· ὡς οὖν ἔβλεπον πάντες ἄνω, γίνονται ἄφωνοι καὶ σεισμοὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ ἐν τῇ κοιλάδι τῆς δίκης καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀέρι, ὥστε συνέχεσθαι πάντας τρόμῳ δεινοτάτῳ καὶ ἀπορίᾳ πολλῇ.

87. “Ὅσπερ δὲ βήλου τινὸς ἐπαρθέντος τοῦ στερεώματος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,<sup>h</sup> ἄφων ἐφάνη ὁ τίμιος σταυρός, λάμπων φαιδρῶς ὡς ὁ ἥλιος καὶ μαρμαρυγὰς χαρισμάτων ἐπαφίεις· ἐφέρετο δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων προπορευομένου ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ κριτοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης· μετ’ ὀλίγον δὲ γίνεται ὕμνος καὶ αἶνος καινὸς βοῶντων τῶν ἁγίων<sup>i</sup> τό, “Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου, Θεὸς Κύριος, κριτὴς ἐξουσιαστής καὶ ἄρχων τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτοῦ.” Τοῦτου τοῦ ὕμνου γεγωνότος ἐν ἰσχύϊ, ἰδοὺ ἀπεκαλύφθη ὁ Κριτὴς ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν, καθημένος ἐπὶ θρόνου φλογεροῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένου· ἐκ δὲ τῆς πολλῆς λαμπρότητος καὶ καθαρότητος ἐφλέγετο ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἀναστάντων νεκρῶν, ἄφων ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν ἐξήστραπτον<sup>j</sup> ὡς ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἀρπάζοντο ὑπὸ νεφελῶν εἰς τὸν ἀέρα πρὸς ὑπάντησιν τοῦ Κριτοῦ ἐπαιγόμενοι, οἱ δὲ πλείστοι ἐναπέμεινον κάτω μὴ ἀρπαζόμενοι, θρηνοῦντες πικρῶς ὡς οὐ καταξιώθεντες ὑπὸ νεφελῶν ἀρπαγῆναι, καὶ ἦν πικρὰ λύπη καὶ ὁδύνη ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτῶν· ἔκλιναν δὲ γόνυ τῷ Κριτῇ καὶ πάλιν ἀνέστησαν.

Μετὰ δὲ τῷ καθεσθῆναι ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς ἐτοιμασίας τὸν μέγαν Κριτὴν, εἰστήκει κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις τῶν οὐρανῶν μετὰ πολλοῦ φόβου καὶ τρόμου· ὅσοι δὲ ὑπὸ νεφελῶν ἠρπάγησαν πρὸς θείαν ὑπάντησιν τοῦ δικαίου Κριτοῦ, πάντες ἐκ δεξιῶν ἀπηνέχθησαν·

their tombs *in the twinkling of an eye*.<sup>57</sup> The account of these events, brothers, is horrific even to speak of, because as they stood up, they threw off the soil of the earth, and the battalions of the battalions were coming down from heaven like a multicolored rain at the throne of preparation, crying out mightily and saying “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of fear and trembling*.”<sup>58</sup> And all the people and the innumerable company [of angels] stood looking upward, and they trembled and shuddered at the sight of that fearsome power that was descending to the earth. Then, as everybody was looking up, suddenly there were earthquakes and thunder and flashes of lightning in the valley of judgment and in the air, so that everybody was overcome with the strongest fear and much confusion.

87. As if a curtain were lifted from the firmament of heaven, suddenly the venerable cross appeared, shining brightly like the sun and emitting rays of spiritual gifts. It was carried by the holy angels, with our Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the entire world, going in front. Shortly afterward a new hymn and praise began, with the saints crying aloud, “*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*,”<sup>59</sup> Lord God, the Judge the mighty one, the commander of his peace.” As that hymn was shouted mightily, behold, the Judge was revealed in the clouds, seated on a fiery raised throne. From [his] great brilliance and purity, the earth and heaven were ablaze. And from the multitude of the resurrected dead, suddenly out of their midst [some] shone like the sun and were seized by clouds in the air, being hastened to encounter the Judge.<sup>60</sup> But most remained below, and were not snatched, lamenting bitterly because they were not deemed worthy to be seized by clouds, and in their souls there was bitter sorrow and distress. They bent their knee to the Judge and then they rose again.

After the great Judge sat in the seat of preparation, around him stood the whole power of heaven with great fear and trembling. And those who were seized by clouds for a divine encounter with the just Judge were carried off to the right. But most of those who were not

h Rystenکو places this sentence in the previous chapter.

i Rystenکو omits τῶν ἁγίων. The addition is found in P<sup>2</sup>.

j Rystenکو has ἐξήπτον. The variant reading is found in P<sup>1</sup> and P<sup>2</sup>.

57 1 Corinthians 15:52.

58 See Isaiah 6:3.

59 Psalm 117 (118):26.

60 See 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.

ὅσοι δὲ οὐκ ἠρπάγησαν ὑπὸ νεφελῶν ἐξελέχθη ἐξ αὐτῶν τὸ πλείστον μέρος καὶ παρεδόθη ἀκρίτως τῇ γενένη τοῦ πυρός. Οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων τοῦ [p. 92] Κριτοῦ συνηλάθησαν. Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐξ εὐωνύμων οἱ πλείονες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ ἄρχοντες, ἀρχιερεῖς, ἱερεῖς καὶ βασιλεῖς, κληρικοὶ τε καὶ πολὺ πλῆθος τῶν μοναχῶν καὶ κοσμικῶν, οἱ ἴσταντο ἐν πολλῇ αἰσχύνη καὶ ἐμυκτήριζον ἑαυτοὺς κατατρυχόμενοι διὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀπώλειαν· ἦσαν γὰρ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν αἰσχύνης μεμεστωμένα καὶ συνετρίβοντο ἀγωνιώντες καὶ μεγάλα φυσῶντες· τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἐρρόγγαζον ἄλλοιούμενοι καὶ ὀδυνηρὸν πένθος τοῖς πᾶσιν ὑπῆρχεν· ἄλλοι γὰρ ἴσταντο κοπτόμενοι καὶ δακρύνοντες· ἕτεροι δὲ ἀπονενοημένοι καὶ οὐδὲν ἦν παράκλησις ἀγαθῇ· οἱ δὲ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Κριτοῦ ἐστῶτες ἅπαντες φαιδροὶ καὶ φωτεινοὶ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, ὅλοι σεμνοί, δεδοξασμένοι, λευκοὶ ὡς τὸ φῶς, πεπυρωμένοι τῇ θεοφώτῳ ἀστραπῇ, λάμποντες ἐν πάσῃ ἀληθείᾳ, εἰ μὴ τολμηρὸν εἰπεῖν, ὡς ὁ Κριτὴς αὐτῶν καὶ Θεός.

**88.** Παρευθὺς οὖν ἐπέβλεψεν ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν ὁ φοβερὸς Κριτὴς ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἰς μὲν τοὺς ἐκ δεξιῶν περιχαρῶς θεασάμενος ἐμειδίασεν· ἰδὼν δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐξ εὐωνύμων αὐτοῦ ἐταράχθη ἐν ὀργῇ πολλῇ καὶ ἀπέστρεψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτῶν. Ἀνακράξας δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγει· “Δεῦτε, οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ Πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου· ἐπέινασα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν· ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με· ξένος ἦμην καὶ συνηγάγετέ με· γυμνὸς καὶ περιεβάλετέ με· ἡσθένησα<sup>k</sup> καὶ ἐπεσκεψάσθε με· ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην<sup>l</sup> καὶ ἤλθετε πρὸς με”· ἀποκριθέντες δὲ ἐκεῖνοι εἶπον· “Κύριε, πότε σὲ εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐδρέψαμεν ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν, ἢ ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν; Πότε δὲ σὲ εἶδομεν ἡσθενῆ καὶ ἐπεσκεψάμεθα, ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἤλθομεν πρὸς σε;” Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει αὐτοῖς· “Ἀμήν, ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.”

Τότε στραφεὶς ἐν ὀργῇ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ εὐωνύμων λέγει· “πορεύεσθε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ· ἐπέινασα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην

seized by clouds were selected and delivered without judgment to the Gehenna of fire.<sup>61</sup> The rest of those on the left of the [p. 92] Judge were pressed together. Most of those on the left were Jews and officials, archbishops, priests and emperors, clerics and a great crowd of monastics and laypeople, who stood in great shame and scorned themselves in distress at their own perdition. For their faces were filled with shame and they were crushed in agony and breathed heavily. Some breathed so stertorously that they changed for the worse, and were all overcome by painful mourning. Others beat their breasts and shed tears; and others were in despair and nothing could console them. But those who stood to the right of the Judge were all beaming and bright like the sun, all of them honored, glorified, white as the light, inflamed by the divinely kindled lightning, most truly shining, if it is not too daring to say, like their Judge and God.

**88.** Presently then, that awesome Judge looked carefully, side to side, and to those on the right, he smiled, beholding them with exceeding gladness. But seeing those to his left, he was agitated with great anger and turned his face away from them. He cried out with a loud voice and said, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you gave me clothing; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.” Then they answered and said, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink or [saw you] a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick and we took care of you, or in prison and visited you?” And then he answers them and says, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Then he turned in anger toward those in the left side and said, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did

k Rystenko has ἡσθενῆς. I follow Matthew 25:36, a reading also found in P<sup>1</sup>.

l Rystenko omits ἦμην. I follow Matthew 25:36, a reading also found in P<sup>1</sup>.

61 It is unclear who these people are in particular.

καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενὴς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με.” Καὶ ἀποκριθέντες καὶ αὐτοὶ εἶπον. “Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ [p. 93] καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι;” Πάλιν δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει αὐτοῖς. “Ἀμήν, ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ’ ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. Πορεύεσθε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ οἱ ἐσκοτισμένοι τῆς γῆς, εἰς τὸν τάρταρον, εἰς τὸν βρυγμὸν τῶν ὀδόντων, ἐκεῖ ἔσται τὸ οὐαὶ καὶ ὀδυρμὸς διηνεκής.”

Ταῦτα εἰπὼν καὶ ἀποφηνάμενος, ἄφνω πρὸ προ-  
σώπου τοῦ ἀνατολικοῦ μέρους ποταμὸς πυρὸς μέγας  
καὶ φοβερὸς ἀνέτειλεν κραταιῶς πορευόμενος ὡς ἐπὶ  
δυσμῶν. Ἦν δὲ ὡς θάλασσα μεγάλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἐν  
τῷ πλάτει καὶ τῷ μήκει αὐτοῦ· μεγάλως οὖν πτοηθέντε  
οἱ ἐξ εὐωνύμων ἐν τῷ ἀναβλῦσαι τὸν ποταμόν, ἔτρε-  
μον σφόδρα ἀπορούμενοι καὶ ἡλλοιοῦντο ὡς ἐν ἐκστά-  
σει. Παραχρῆμα δὲ ὁ φοβερὸς ἐκεῖνος προσέταξεν ἵνα  
μέσον τοῦ ποταμοῦ διέλθωσιν δίκαιοι καὶ ἀμαρτωλοὶ  
ἵνα αὐτοὺς τὸ πῦρ δοκιμάσῃ· ἐν πρώτοις δὲ ἀπῆρ-  
ξαντο οἱ ἐκ δεξιῶν ἐστῶτες τῆς δοκιμῆς· καὶ διήλθον  
ἅπαντες εὐρυζοί<sup>m</sup> ὥσπερ χρυσίον καθαρὸν διὰ μέσου  
τοῦ πυρὸς. Καὶ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν οὐ κατεκάησαν, ἀλλὰ  
φαιδρὰ μᾶλλον καὶ διαυγὴ ἀπεφάνθησαν διὰ τῆς δοκι-  
μῆς· καὶ ἡγάλλοντο σφόδρα ἐν τῷ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι  
αὐτῶν τὰ θεῖα ἔργα καὶ μὴ εὐρεθῆναι ἐν αὐτοῖς ῥύπον.  
Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἦλθον ὀπισθεν καὶ οἱ ἐξ εὐωνύμων τοῦ  
διαβῆναι μέσον τοῦ πυρὸς πρὸς τὸ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι  
τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. Ὡς οὖν ἀπῆρξαντο διαβαίνειν, φλόξ  
κατέφλεξεν ἀμαρτωλοὺς μέσον κατέχουσα· καὶ τὰ  
ἔργα αὐτῶν ὡς ἄχυρον κατεκάη, τὰ δὲ σώματα αὐτῶν  
ἔμειναν σῶα ἐπ’ αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι πυροῦσθαι ἀφθάρτως  
σὺν τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ· οὐδεὶς γὰρ  
ἠδυνήθη ἐξ αὐτῶν διελθεῖν τοῦ πυρὸς ἐκείνου τὸν  
ποταμόν, ἀλλὰ πάντας κατεκυρίευσεν τὸ πῦρ, δίκης  
ὡς ἀξίους καὶ τιμωρίας.

89. Μετὰ οὖν τὸ διαμερισθῆναι τοὺς ἀμαρτωλοὺς εἰς  
πάσας τὰς κολάσεις, διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς γὰρ διεσπάρη-  
σαν εἰς πάσας τὰς κολάσεις, τότε ἀνέστη τοῦ θρόνου

not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing,  
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” And they  
replied and said “Lord, when was it that we saw you hun-  
gry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison,  
[p. 93] and did not take care of you?” Then he replied to  
them saying “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to  
one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”<sup>62</sup> You, the  
darkened of the earth, depart from me into Tartaros, to  
the gnashing of teeth;<sup>63</sup> there will be woe and perpetual  
lamentation.”

After he said these words and gave his decision, in  
front of the eastern part suddenly a great and awesome  
river of fire<sup>64</sup> rose mightily, going toward the West. In  
its width and length it was like a great and wide sea.<sup>65</sup>  
Those on the left were greatly terrified because of the  
gushing forth of the river; they trembled, for they were at  
a complete loss, and they were changed as if in a trance.  
Immediately, the awesome one ordered that both the  
righteous and the sinners should pass through the mid-  
dle of the river so that the fire might test them.<sup>66</sup> First to  
begin the trial were those who stood on the right. And  
all passed through the midst of the fire ringing true like  
pure gold.<sup>67</sup> And their works were not destroyed in the  
fire but were rather made manifest, through the trial, as  
beaming and radiant. And they greatly rejoiced because  
their divine works were tested, and no stain was found  
on them. After this, those from the left side were next in  
line to pass through the middle of the fire so that their  
works might be tested. But as they started to cross, fire  
consumed the sinners, detaining them in the middle.  
And their works were consumed like straw; their bodies,  
however, remained whole into the ages, and they are still  
burning eternally along with the devil and his angels. For  
none of them was able to cross over the river of fire, but  
the fire overcame them all, as they were worthy of judg-  
ment and punishment.

89. After the sinners were distributed to the punish-  
ments—for it was through the fire that they were  
dispersed to all the punishments—then the awesome

62 Matthew 25:34–45. *VBiun* (5.9–10) also incorporates the same passage.

63 See Luke 13:28; Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30.

64 Daniel 7:10.

65 Psalm 103 (104):25.

66 The following episode is inspired by 1 Corinthians 3:12–15.

67 Cf. Revelation 21:18; *VBiun* 372.

m Rystenko has εὐριζοί.

αὐτοῦ ὁ φοβερὸς Κριτὴς καὶ ἀπήρξατο τὴν πορείαν ποιεῖσθαι ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν θείαν παστάδα σὺν πάσι τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ· κύκλῳ δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπῆει μετὰ πολλοῦ φόβου καὶ τρόμου πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις τῶν οὐρανῶν, ψάλλουσα καὶ λέγουσα· “*Ἀρατε πύλας, οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάρθητε, πύλαι τῆς Ἑδέμ, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται Θεὸς θεῶν Κύριος σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ, κληρονομίαν αἰώνιον χαριζόμενος αὐτοῖς.*” Ἀπεκρίνατο δὲ ἕτερον τάγμα καὶ ἔλεγεν· “*Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς υἱοῖς Θεοῦ χρηματίζουσιν [p. 94] κατὰ τὴν χάριν, Θεὸς Κύριος σὺν τοῖς υἱοῖς Σιών καὶ ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν.*”

Οἱ δὲ προπορευόμενοι τοῦ Κυρίου ἀρχάγγελοι ἐμεγάλυναν καὶ αὐτοί, μέλος τι οὐράνιον καὶ σωτήριον ἔψαλλον λέγοντες ὡς ὑπὸ ἀντιφώνου· “*Δεῦτε ἀγαλλιασώμεθα τῷ Κυρίῳ, ἀλαλάξωμεν τῷ Θεῷ τῷ Σωτήρι ἡμῶν, προφθάσωμεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐξομολογήσει καὶ ἐν ψαλμοῖς ἀλαλάξωμεν αὐτῷ.*” Ἀνταπεκρίνετο δὲ ἕτερον τάγμα ψάλλον ἡδέως καὶ λέγων ὅτι, “*Θεὸς μέγας Κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, ὅτι ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς, καὶ τὰ ὕψη τῶν ὀρέων αὐτοῦ εἰσιν.*” Ταῦτα καὶ ἄλλα θαυμαστὰ ἔλεγον οἱ ἅγιοι ἐκεῖνοι ἄγγελοι, ὥστε ἐκ τῆς ἡδύτητος εἰς ὕπνον τρέπεσθαι τὸν ἀκούοντα καὶ εἰς ἀνεκδιήγητον ἀγαλλίασιν· ψαλλόντων δὲ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων οὕτω, μετὰ ὕμνου εἰσῆλθαν οἱ ἅγιοι<sup>n</sup> σὺν τῷ Κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ εἰς τὸν ἐπουράνιον θάλαμον τῆς θείας παστάδος ἐν σκιρτώσει καρδία· καὶ ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ πύλαι.

90. Μετὰ δὲ τὸ κλεισθῆναι τὰς πύλας τοῦ θείου νυμφῶνος, τότε προσεκαλέσατο ὁ Κύριος τοὺς στρατηγούς τῶν θείων ἀγγέλων· καὶ παρέστη<sup>o</sup> Μιχαὴλ καὶ Γαβριήλ, Οὐριήλ καὶ Ραφαήλ, καὶ ἔπειτα οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν καθεξῆς ταγμάτων· εἶτα ἐκλήθησαν οἱ δώδεκα φωστήρες καὶ ἀπόστολοι ἐνώπιον τῶν θειοτάτων ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς φοβερά ἀστραπὴ λαμπρότητος καὶ δόξης, ὥστε ἀναλάμψαι αὐτοὺς θαυμαστότερον καὶ ὑψηλότερον. Πάλιν ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς δώδεκα θρόνοι πυρίμορφοι ἀστερόθετοι καὶ ἐκάθισαν σὺν τῷ διδασκάλῳ αὐτῶν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν πολλῇ τιμῇ καὶ περιφανείᾳ, καὶ ἦν ἡ δόξα αὐτῶν φῶς αἰώνιον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἀπρόσιτον·

Judge stood up from his throne and began, along with his saints, to make his way toward the divine bridal chamber. The entire force of heaven surrounded him with great fear and trembling, singing and saying, “*Raise the gates, O rulers of yours, and be raised up, O gates of Eden, and the God of gods, the Lord shall enter along with his saints, granting them eternal inheritance.*”<sup>68</sup> And another battalion responded saying, “*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, along with all the sons of God who serve [p. 94] according to grace, the Lord is God along with the sons of Sion and he showed us the light.*”<sup>69</sup>

And the archangels that marched ahead of the Lord magnified him as well and sang a heavenly and salvific song like an antiphon, “*O come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to God our savior! Let us anticipate his face with acknowledgment, and with melodies let us make a joyful noise to him.*”<sup>70</sup> And another battalion answered again, singing sweetly and saying, “*The Lord is a great God, a great king over all the earth,*<sup>71</sup> *because in his hands are the ends of the earth and the heights of the mountains are his.*”<sup>72</sup> The holy angels were saying these and other marvelous things, so that the hearer could become drowsy from the sweetness and turn to indescribable joy. And while the holy angels sang in that way, the saints, along with the Lord Jesus Christ, entered with praise into the heavenly inner room of the divine bridal chamber with a leaping heart; and the gates were closed.

90. After the gates of the divine bridal chamber were closed, the Lord invited the generals of the divine angels; Michael and Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael came, and then the commanders of the subsequent battalions. Then the twelve luminaries and apostles were called in front of the most divine angels, and an awesome lightning of splendor and glory was given to them so that they shone forth yet more marvelously and more loftily. And twelve fiery, star-studded thrones were again given to them, and they sat with Christ, their teacher, in great honor and splendor, and their glory was a light eternal and incomprehensible and unapproachable. And they

n Rystenko adds ἐκεῖνοι ἄγγελοι.

o Rystenko adds πρὸς τὸν.

68 Psalm 23 (24):7.

69 Psalm 117 (118):26–27.

70 Psalm 94 (95):1–2.

71 Psalm 46 (47):3.

72 Psalm 94 (95):4.

καὶ ἦσαν ἐνδεδυμένοι ἐν καθαρότητι, ἐν ἡλέκτρῳ θαυμαζόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀχράντων δυνάμεων. Ἐδόθησαν δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ στέφανοι κορυφαϊότατοι καὶ φρικωδέστατοι, κρυσταλλοειδεῖς διὰ λίθων τιμίων καὶ οὐρανίων εὐτρεπισμένοι, ἐφοροῦντο δὲ ἐπάνω τῶν κορυφῶν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ φοβερῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἀγγέλων<sup>p</sup> βασταζόμενοι καὶ τὰ πάντα συσσεύοντες.

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσῆχθησαν καὶ οἱ ἐβδομήκοντα μαθηταὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ προσώπου Κυρίου, ἐστῶτων τῶν μεγάλων ἀρχόντων κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐδόθη καὶ αὐτοῖς ἡ τοιαύτη τιμὴ καὶ δόξα· πλὴν ὅτι τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων θαυμαστότεροι ὑπῆρχον οἱ στέφανοι, φρικτὸν γὰρ θάμβος ἦν τὸ ἰδεῖν τοὺς στεφάνους, ὥσπερ ὁ ἥλιος οὐκ ἔξ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατανοῆσαι αὐτόν, κάκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐπέδωκαν τῷ μακαρίῳ Νήφοντι κατιδεῖν αὐτοὺς διὰ τὴν πολλὴν καὶ ἐξαίσιον λαμπρότητα αὐτῶν.

Μετὰ [p. 95] ταῦτα εἶδε πάλιν ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ Νήφων, ὅτι εἰσῆχθη πρὸ προσώπου Κυρίου ὁ μέγας χορὸς τῶν μαρτύρων, ἐστῶσης τῆς τάξεως πάσης τῶν ἐπουρανίων δυνάμεων κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ φοβεροῦ. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἡ ζώνη καὶ ἡ μεγάλη στρατιὰ ἦν ἀπεβάλετο ὁ δράκων ὁ ἄγριος ὁ Σατανᾶς πεσὼν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐγένοντο οἱ μεγάλοι μάρτυρες μεγάλοι ἀγγελοστράτηγοι<sup>q</sup> καὶ ἄρχοντες θεῖοι ἐπουρανίων ταγμάτων· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἠνέχθη αὐτοῖς τὸ πολὺ πλῆθος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐπουρανίων στεφάνων, καὶ ἐτέθη ἐπὶ ταῖς ἁγίαις αὐτῶν κορυφαῖς. Ὡσπερ δὲ ἡλίου λάμποντος, οὕτως ὑπῆρχον οἱ στέφανοι ἐπικείμενοι αὐτοῖς, ἐτέρποντο δὲ καὶ ἀγαλλιώμενοι μεγάλως.

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσῆχθη καὶ ὁ θεϊότατος χορὸς τῶν ἁγίων ἱεραρχῶν, ἱερέων, διακόνων καὶ κληρικῶν καὶ ἐτέθη καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ταῖς θεαῖς κορυφαῖς στέφανος αἰώνιος καὶ ἀμαράντινος ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν ἐργασίαν καὶ ὑπομονὴν καὶ σπουδὴν καὶ εὐσπλαγχνίαν καὶ ἀγάπην αὐτῶν. Ἐτέρποντο δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀγαλλώμενοι μεγάλως σφόδρα σφόδρα. Ἐκληρώθη δὲ καὶ αὐτοῖς ἡ φαιδρότης ὡς ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὡς πῦρ ἐν πολλῇ εὐωδίᾳ καὶ χάριτι, ἐδόθη δὲ αὐτοῖς σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς κληρικοῖς καὶ ἐκκλησιασταῖς τὸ νοερὸν καὶ ἐπουράνιον θυσιαστήριον τοῦ προσφέρειν αὐτοὺς θυσίαν ἁγίαν καὶ τελείαν καὶ εὐάρεστον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· ὑπῆρχον δὲ πάντες μὲν ἐστεμμένοι, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἦν ἴσος τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁ στέφανος· στέφανος γὰρ στεφάνου ὑπερέβαλλεν ἐν δόξῃ, ὥσπερ ἀστὴρ ἀστέρος, πολλοὶ γὰρ ἱερεῖς

were clothed in purity, and shining like amber they were admired by the undefiled powers. And they were given the most important and awesome crowns, crystalline and decorated with valuable and heavenly stones. These were worn on the top of their heads, being carried by awesome and large angels who shook everything continuously.

After these things, the seventy disciples were also brought before the Lord—while the great rulers stood around his throne—and to them also was given such honor and glory, except that the crowns of the twelve apostles were more marvelous, for to behold the crowns was a startling wonder. Just as the sun does not allow the human eye to observe it well, similarly the crowns did not allow the blessed Niphon to behold them on account of their abundant and extraordinary brilliance.

After these things, [p. 95] the servant of God Niphon saw again the great choir of martyrs was brought in front of the Lord, while the entire order of the heavenly forces stood around the formidable throne. To them was given the belt and the great army that the wild dragon Satan lost when he fell from heaven. And straightaway the great martyrs became great generals of angels and divine rulers of the heavenly battalions. Immediately the great multitude of holy and heavenly crowns was brought to them and was placed on their holy heads. The crowns laid upon them were like the shining sun and they rejoiced exceedingly.

After these things, the most divine choir of the holy hierarchs, priests, deacons, and clerics was brought in and an eternal and imperishable crown was placed on each of their holy heads according to their work and endurance and zeal and compassion and love. And they were delighted, rejoicing exceedingly and strongly. And the radiance was allotted to them in great redolence and grace like the sun and like fire. And the noetic and heavenly sanctuary was given to them and to all the clerics and the leaders of the church so that they might offer a sacrifice that is holy and perfect and acceptable among themselves. They were all crowned but the crown was not the same for all. For one crown surpassed in glory another crown, as a star outshines another star,<sup>73</sup> because many priests

p Rystenko omits ἀγγέλων. The addition is found in P<sup>2</sup>.

q Rystenko has ἀγγελόστατοι, a word not found in the TLG.

73 See 1 Corinthians 15:41.

ἀπὸ ἀρχιερέων ἐνδοξότεροι ὑπῆρχον καὶ λαμπρότεροι, ἀλλὰ καὶ διάκονοι καὶ κληρικοὶ ὑπερέβαλλον ἐν ἀγιότητι ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς.

Ἀπὸ τούτων εἰσῆχθη ὁ εὐλαβὴς χορὸς τῶν ἁγίων μοναχῶν, καὶ ἦν ἡ ἰδέα αὐτῶν ὡς εὐωδία μυστικῇ ἡλιακῇ, μαρμαρυγὰς θεοφεγγεῖς ἀστράπτουσα πλήρης δόξης Θεοῦ παντοκράτορος. Παραχρῆμα οὖν ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἀνὰ ἑξ πτέρυγες, καὶ ἐγένοντο περιβαλλόμενοι αὐτὰς φρικτὰ Χερουβὶμ καὶ Σεραφὶμ ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, κρᾶζοντες τό, “Ἄγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, Κύριος Σαβαώθ, πλήρης πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.” Ἡ δὲ δόξα αὐτῶν μεγάλη ἦν, πολυόμματος, ὑπερδεδοξασμένη καὶ θείου φωτὸς ἐμφορουμένη. τὸ δὲ στέφος αὐτῶν ἦν ποικίλον, ἀθεώρητον, ἡγλαϊσμένον, διαφέρον, πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς ἰδρώτας ἐκάστου καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐδόθη καὶ ἡ δόξα, ὡς διαφέρει ὁ ἥλιος σελήνης.

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα εἰσῆχθη [p. 96] ὁ χορὸς τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς τὸ ἄσμα τῶν ἁσμάτων καὶ ἡ ψαλμικὴ κινύρα τοῦ Δαβὶδ μετὰ τυμπάνων καὶ χορῶν, καὶ φῶς ἀστραπῆς, κάλλος καὶ φωταυγίαι ἀγαλλιᾶσεως καὶ ἡ χαριστήριος αἶνεσις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Ὁ στέφανος δὲ αὐτῶν ἦν ὡς ἐκ χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀστραπῆς εὐρυζος<sup>r</sup> καὶ μετέωρος σφόδρα σφόδρα. Ἐτάχθη δὲ αὐτοῖς μικρὸ τί ἄσαι παρὰ τοῦ δεσπότης τῆς θείας παστάδος καὶ ἤνεσαν ἄσμα τερπνόν, ὥστε σκιρτῆσαι ἅπαντας τοὺς ἀπ’ αἰῶνος ἁγίους εὐαρεστήσαντας τῷ Θεῷ. Ταῦτα δὲ λαβόντες οἱ ἄγιοι ἐκ τῆς ἀχράντου δεξιᾶς τοῦ Σωτῆρος, ἔμενον ἀκμὴν λαβεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐκεῖνα, ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν, καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη.

Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ εἰσῆχθη καὶ πᾶς ὁ χορὸς τῶν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου σωθέντων, πέννητες καὶ ἄρχοντες, βασιλεῖς καὶ ἰδιῶται, δούλοι καὶ ἐλεύθεροι. Σταθέντων δὲ πάντων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θείου νυμφίου, γέγονεν εἰς αὐτοὺς διάκρισις καὶ διεχωρίσθησαν ἐν ἐνὶ οἱ ἐλεήμονες καὶ ἄγνοί, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἡ τρυφὴ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς Ἑδέμ, καὶ παλάτια οὐράνια καὶ ἔκφωτα, καὶ στέφανος εὐπρέπειας καὶ ἁγιασμοῦ καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσεως, θρόνοι τε καὶ σκήπτρα καὶ ἄγγελοι ἔκφωτοι ὑπουργεῖν ταῖς τούτων λαμπρότησιν, καὶ ἦν ἡ χαρὰ δρόσος ποιότητος καὶ ἀήρ λελαμπρυσμένος.

were more honorable and radiant than archbishops, and even deacons and [lower] clerics surpassed archbishops and priests in sanctity.

After these things the pious choir of holy monastics was brought in, and their appearance was like a mystical and sunny fragrance, flashing forth rays that shed divine light, and full of the glory of God, the ruler of all. Forthwith six wings were given to each, and, having put them on, they became by the power of the Holy Spirit awesome cherubim and seraphim, crying aloud, “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of his glory.*”<sup>74</sup> And their glory was great, many-eyed, hyper-glorious, and filled with divine light. Their crowns were many colored, impossible to behold, splendid, different—as the sun differs from the moon—because the glory was also given according to each one’s sweat and struggles.

After these things the choir of the holy prophets was brought in [p. 96] and they received the song of songs and the psalmic *kinnor*<sup>75</sup> of David, along with drums and choirs, and the light of lightning, the beauty and brightness of exultation, and the thanksgiving praise of the Holy Spirit. Their crown was as if of gold and lightning, ringing true and quite prominent. They were ordered by the master of the divine bridal chamber to sing something brief, and they sang a delightful song of praise, so that all the saints who were perpetually pleasing to God leaped with joy. And the saints, having received these crowns from the undefiled right hand of the Savior, waited at the culminating point to receive *what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived*.<sup>76</sup>

After these things, the whole choir of those who were saved while in the world [= laypeople], poor people and rulers, emperors and commoners, slaves and free were brought in. As they all stood in front of the divine bridegroom, a division took place, and the merciful and the pure were separated to one side, and to them were given the joy of the paradise of Eden, heavenly and radiant palaces, and a crown of comeliness and sanctification and exultation, as well as thrones and scepters and radiant angels to render service to their splendor, and the joy was like quality dew and brilliant air.

74 Isaiah 6:3.

75 A Jewish stringed instrument.

76 1 Corinthians 2:9. Cf. Isaiah 64:4.

r Rystenka has εὐριζος.

Μετὰ τούτους εἰσήχθησαν ὅσοι διὰ Χριστὸν πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ἐγένοντο καὶ ὑψώθησαν σφόδρα, στέφος λαβόντες εὐπρεπείας ἐκ χειρὸς Κυρίου· ἀπεκληρώθη δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. Ἀπ' αὐτῶν δὲ εἰσήχθησαν οἱ πενήσαντες τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ θερμῇ καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἡ μεγάλη παράκλησις τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ἐν πολλῇ τερπνότητι καὶ ἦν ἡ χαρὰ αὐτῶν λελαμπρυσμένη τῇ χάριτι τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ἀπὸ τούτων εἰσήχθησαν οἱ πραεῖς καὶ ἄπλαστοι καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς κληρονομία ἡ γῆ ἐν ἣ ἀποστάζει γλυκασμὸν καὶ εὐωδία τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ἦν αὐτοῖς εὐφροσύνη καὶ τέρψις πολλή ἐν τῷ γινῶναι αὐτοὺς ὅτι ἀποκεκλήρωται αὐτοῖς ἡ μακαρία γῆ. Ἐδόθη δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ στέφανος ῥοδοειδής, τερπνός, ποικιλόθετος, μαρμαρυγὰς ἐπαφίεις, ὃν λαβόντες ἐκ χειρὸς Κυρίου ἠγάλλοντο εὐφραϊνόμενοι ἐν γεγηθυῖα ψυχῇ.

Μετὰ τούτων ἤχθησαν καὶ οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ οἱ μεμνημένοι τῶν ἐντολῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς εἰς κόρον ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης μισθὸς καὶ ἠδύνθησαν τῇ ἀγαθῇ αὐτῶν προθέσει, βλέποντες τὸν βασιλέα Χριστὸν ἐν αἰνέσει ὑπερυψούμενον καὶ δοξαζόμενον ὑπὸ ἁγίων ἀγγέλων· ὁ δὲ στέφανος [p. 97] αὐτῶν ἦν τίμιος καὶ ἠγλαϊσμένος, σοφία πολλῇ περιεχυμένος.

Ἀπὸ τούτων εἰσήχθη ὁ χορὸς τῶν καθαρῶ τῇ καρδίᾳ ἀγαθὰ ἔργα εἰσπραξάντων. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς μεγαλόφωτος ὀφθαλμὸς ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως ἐμπλεως ὢν, ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς καὶ θεωρητικὴ ὄρασις ὑπὲρ φωτός, ὥστε βλέπειν αὐτοὺς καθαρῶς τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς διηνεκῇ αἰῶνα. Ὑπῆρχεν δὲ ὁ στέφανος αὐτῶν ποικιλόμορφος καὶ φανότατος, εἶχεν δὲ ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν αὐτοῦ κρυσταλλοειδεῖς σταυροὺς καὶ ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων δῆλον, ἐν οἷς ἡ γραφὴ χερουβικῶν ὀφθαλμῶν.

Μετὰ τούτων πάλιν εἰσήχθη ὁ τίμιος χορὸς τῶν εἰρηνοποιῶν καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἡ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, ἐδόθη δὲ αὐτοῖς εὐδοκία, σύνεσις καὶ ἔλεος φωτισμοῦ ἐκ τῆς λαμπρότητος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐπειτα ἦλθεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἀστράγαλος

After these individuals, all who became *poor in spirit*<sup>77</sup> for Christ were brought in, and they were exalted greatly. And they received a crown of comeliness from the hand of the Lord, and to them was allotted also the kingdom of heaven. After them, those who mourned for their sins in fervent repentance were brought in, and the great consolation of the Holy Trinity was given to them in much delight, and their joy was made brilliant by the grace of God.

Following these, the meek<sup>78</sup> and the honest were brought in and to them was allotted the earth where the spirit of God trickles down sweetness and fragrance. There was in them much joy and delight in knowing that the blessed land was allotted to them. To them was given a rose-like, delightful, colorful, radiant crown; when they received it from the hand of the Lord, they rejoiced exceedingly, being delighted in their cheerful souls.

After these things, *those who hunger and thirst for justice*<sup>79</sup> and those who remember his commandments<sup>80</sup> were brought in, and the reward of justice was given to them in abundance, and they were delighted at their good disposition, seeing Christ the King being supremely exalted in praise and glorified by holy angels. Their crown [p. 97] was honorable and glorified, enveloped in much wisdom.

Following them, the choir of those who have enacted good works with a pure heart was brought in.<sup>81</sup> An eye of great light and full of the oil of rejoicing was given to them, and contemplative vision beyond the light was given to them so that they could see God's countenance clearly and unceasingly. Their crown was variegated and most bright, and had crystalline crosses on the front and the back, and on the left and right sides cherubic eyes were depicted.

Again after them the honorable choir of the peacemakers<sup>82</sup> was brought in, and peace and the wisdom of God and his spirit were given to them, and also good will, sagacity, and oil of illumination from the brightness of Christ. Then came to them the wrist of a hand,<sup>83</sup> which held an immaterial pencil and which wrote on

77 Matthew 5:3.

78 See Matthew 5:5.

79 Matthew 5:6.

80 See Psalm 102 (103):18.

81 See Matthew 5:8.

82 See Matthew 5:9.

83 See Daniel 5:5, 24.

χειρὸς κατέχων ἄλλον γραφεῖον καὶ ἐν τοῖς αὐτῶν μετώποις ἔγραψεν “Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος χάριτι καὶ οὐ φύσει”. ἔσχατον δὲ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς στέφανος εἰρήνης λελαμπρυσμένος, ἔχων τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἁπλῶς ἐγγεγραμμένον· ἠὺφραίνοντο δὲ ἀγαλλιώμενοι τῇ ἡδονῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ἀπὸ τούτων εἰσῆχθησαν οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἔνεκεν δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς αἶνος θεῖος καὶ ζωὴ πολυθαύμαστος, ἀεροβόλους αὐγὰς καὶ ἀκτῖνας ἀστράπτουσα, ἐδόθησαν δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ θρόνοι ἄφραστοι τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, οἱ στέφανοι δὲ αὐτῶν θεῖον ἄλλον εὐρυζον<sup>s</sup> χρυσίον καὶ πεφωτισμένον· καὶ ἐκ τῆς δόξης ἠὺφραίνοντο τῶν ἀγγέλων οἱ χοροί.

Μετὰ τούτους δὲ εἰσῆχθη ὁ θεῖος χορὸς τῶν ὀνειδισθέντων ἔνεκεν Χριστοῦ, τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ὁ ἅγιος μακαρισμὸς τῶν θείων ἐπαίνων καὶ ἀγγέλων τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐδόθη δὲ αὐτοῖς περισσοτέρα τιμὴ καὶ δόξα καὶ πλούσιον φῶς καὶ ἀκρότατον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἴτα ἐδόθη ἐκάστῳ θρόνος ποικίλος καὶ ἐκφαντορικὸς<sup>t</sup> καὶ σκῆπτρα πρέποντα Θεῷ καὶ ἁγίοις. Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς στέφανοι βασιλικοί, κεκαλλωπισμένοι τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ δὲ ἔπαινος αὐτῶν εἶχεν ἀσύγκριτον εὐπρέπειαν καὶ ὠραιότητα.

Μετὰ τούτους εἰσῆχθησαν ἕτεροι, οἵτινες μετενόησαν ἐπὶ ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτίαις, οὐ προέθεντο δὲ νηστεαῖς καὶ προσευχαῖς σχολάσαι, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν πονηροῦ ἀπέφυγον, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν εἰς τόνον οὐκ εἰργάσαντο. Εἶπεν δὲ τούτοις ὁ νυμφίος ὅτι “ἀρέσκει ἡμῖν [p. 98] καὶ τὸ ὅτι ἐξεφύγετε τὴν κόλασιν”. μόνον δὲ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ὡς εἶδος βέργας, σημεῖον τὸ τῆς ἀκολασίας, ἵνα ἐλεύθεροι μὲν ἔσονται τοῦ πυρός, ἐν τόπῳ δὲ σκοτώδει καθίσωσιν.

Ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ πάλιν εἰσῆχθησαν ἕτεροι, οἵτινες ἔργα μὲν ἀγαθὰ εἶχον καὶ ἐλεημοσύνην πολλὴν σφόδρα, διὰ δὲ τὸ μέχρις ἐσχάτης ἀναπνοῆς κρίνειν καὶ καταλαλεῖν τὸν πλησίον, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πορνεία δεδουλώσθαι αὐτούς. Κατετάγησαν καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς τὸ κατώτατον σκότος, ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο ὡς ὀμίχλη φωτιζόμενον μὲν μικρόν τι, νοτίαν ὀλίγην κεκτημένον.

Ἀπὸ τούτων εἰσῆχθη πολὺ πλῆθος τῶν ἐθνῶν, οἵτινες νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες, φύσει δὲ μᾶλλον τὰ τοῦ

their foreheads,<sup>84</sup> “Jesus Christ, son of the living God, by grace and not nature.”<sup>85</sup> Lastly, there was given to them a brilliant crown of peace, having the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit written intangibly. And they were delighted, rejoicing exceedingly in the pleasure of God.

After these things those who were persecuted for righteousness’ sake<sup>86</sup> were led in, and were given divine praise and much-admired life, [a life] shining with airborne rays and beams. And they were given also marvelous thrones of the kingdom of heaven, and their crowns were of divine immaterial and gleaming gold that rings true, and the choirs of angels were gladdened by this glory.

After these things, there was brought in the divine choir of those who were reviled on account of Christ, our great God and savior of our souls. And they were given the holy blessing of divine praises and of the angels of God, and more honor and glory and the rich and highest light of Christ were given to them. Then each was given a many-colored and splendid throne and scepters of God and saints. After this, they were given royal crowns, adorned by the glory of God, and their praise was of incomparable comeliness and beauty.

After these things, others were brought in who, although they repented for their own sins, did not intend to devote themselves to fasting and prayers; they avoided the evil, but did not work at the good intensely. And the bridegroom said to them, “It satisfies us [p. 98] that you escaped punishment.” And only a kind of rod was given to them, a sign that they would not be punished—so that they would be spared from the fire—although they would be put in a dark place.

After these things again others were led in, those who had good deeds and [had shown] exceedingly much charity, but until their last breath had judged and slandered their neighbor; and not only these things, but they were also enslaved by fornication. They were assigned to the lowest darkness, which is like fog, but it is somewhat illuminated, having acquired a bit of moisture.

After these things a multitude of peoples was brought in who, though they did not have the [divine]

84 See Revelation 7:3–4, 14:1, 22:4.

85 This peculiar and undeniably heretical assertion that Christ is the son of the living God by grace and not by nature is omitted in P<sup>1</sup>.

86 See Matthew 5:10.

s Rystenکو has ἔβριζον.

t Rystenکو has φαντορικὸς, a word not found in the TLG.

νόμου τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσαντες ἦσαν, πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔλαμπον ὡς ὁ ἥλιος διὰ τὸ ἀγνὸν καὶ καθαρὸν αὐτῶν. Ἀπεκκληρώθη δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς παράδεισος καὶ ἡ εὐωδία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ στέφανοι κατάφαιδροι, ῥόδοις καὶ κρίνοις συμπεπλεγμένοι. Ἐν δὲ μόνον ἦν αὐτοῖς σκληρὸν καὶ ὀδυνηρὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐμέμφοντο ἑαυτούς· διὰ γὰρ τῆς ὑστερήσεως τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος ὑπῆρχον τυφλοὶ παντελῶς, μὴ βλέποντες τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὸ φῶς, ὃ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτοῖς ὁ ἐλεήμων Θεός· φῶς γὰρ καὶ ἐπουράνιος ὀφθαλμός ἐστιν τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα, διὰ τοῦτο ὁ ἀποτυχὼν αὐτοῦ, κἂν μυρία ἀγαθὰ ἔργα ἐργάσῃται, κληρονομεῖ μὲν ἄνεσιν καὶ ἐκ τῶν αἰσθήσεων, ἀκοῆς φημί καὶ ὀσφρήσεως, αἰσθάνεται τινος εὐωδίας καὶ ἡδύτητος, βλέπει δὲ οὐδὲν καὶ ἐκ τοῦτου ἀθυμεῖ σφόδρα σιαινόμενος μεγάλως.

Ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ βλέπει ὁ δίκαιος Νήφων εἰσερχόμενον τάγμα ἁγίων, οἵτινες ἦσαν τὰ τέκνα τῶν Χριστιανῶν. Ὑπῆρχον δὲ πάντες τῇ ἡλικίᾳ ὡσεὶ τριῶν<sup>u</sup> ἐτῶν. Καὶ ἀτενίσας εἰς αὐτοὺς ὁ νυμφίος ἱλαρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ ἔφη· “ὁ μὲν ὑφαντὸς τοῦ βαπτίσματος ὑμῶν ἄσπιλος, ἔργα δὲ οὐδαμοῦ, τί οὖν ποιήσω ὑμῖν;” Τότε θαρσαλέως λέγουσιν καὶ αὐτοί· “Κύριε, ἐστέρησας ἡμᾶς τῶν ἐπιγείων σου ἀγαθῶν, κἂν τῶν ἐπουρανίων σου μὴ ὑστερήσῃς ἡμᾶς.” Ὁ δὲ νυμφίος μειδιάσας ἀπεκληρώσατο καὶ αὐτοῖς τὰ αἰώνια ἀγαθὰ εἰς διηνεκὴ χρόνον, ἐδόθησαν δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ στέφανοι πίστεως καὶ ἀγνείας καὶ ἀκακίας καὶ ἀπολαύσεως. Ὑπῆρχον δὲ πολυθαύμαστοι ἐνώπιον τῶν οὐρανίων στρατιῶν, καὶ ἔχαιρον οἱ ἅγιοι ἐκεῖνοι φοροῦντες τοὺς ἀφθάρτους στεφάνους ἐν καθαρᾷ τῇ καρδίᾳ, θαῦμα δὲ ὅτι βλέποντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι τὰ τάγματα πάντων τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους φωστῆρας ἐκελάδουν ἄσματι ἀγαλλιώμενοι σφόδρα ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ καὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο μεγάλως τῇ θείᾳ ἡδονῇ εὐφραινόμενοι.

Ὅτε οὖν πάντες οὗτοι εἰσῆχθησαν καὶ ἐτελέσθησαν, ἔσχατος πάντων ἦχθη μέγας χορὸς πρὸ προσώπου [p. 99] τοῦ θείου νυμφίου, ὁρῶντων τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων καὶ τῶν ἁγίων τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὁ δὲ χορὸς ἐκεῖνος ἦν λάμπων ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ὁ νυμφίος, ὥστε θαμβηθῆναι τοὺς ἁγίους πάντας ἐν τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον· ἔλεγον δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ ἅγιοι· “Τίνες εἰσὶν ἄρα οὗτοι ἐνδοξοὶ καὶ θαυμαστοὶ ὑπάρχοντες; Ποίῳ δὲ τρόπῳ εἰσῆχθησαν ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων;”

law, nevertheless were following naturally [the tenets of] the law of Christ.<sup>87</sup> Many of them were shining like the sun due to their purity and cleanliness. They were allotted the divine paradise and the fragrance of God, and similarly also very luminous crowns, intertwined with roses and lilies. There was only one thing that was hard and painful to them, and for it they blamed themselves. For, due to their lack of holy baptism, they were completely blind and unable to see the glory and the light that the merciful God had granted them. Because holy baptism is light and a heavenly eye, those who failed to attain it, even if they perform countless good deeds, inherit comfort, and from the senses—I mean from hearing and smelling—perceive some fragrance and sweetness, still they see nothing, and because of this are exceedingly despondent and greatly disturbed.

After these things the righteous Niphon saw entering a rank of saints who were the children of Christians. All were about three years of age.<sup>88</sup> The bridegroom, gazing at them earnestly with a cheerful face, said, “Your woven [robe] of baptism is without blemish, but your works are nonexistent. What should I do with you?” They responded daringly, “Lord, you deprived us of your earthly goods; may you not, nevertheless, deprive us of the heavenly ones.” The bridegroom smiled and allotted to them as well eternal goods in perpetuity, and crowns of faith and purity and innocence and enjoyment. And they were much admired in front of the heavenly armies, and these saints rejoiced wearing the incorruptible crowns with a pure heart. It was a wonder that the holy angels, when they saw the ranks of all the saints and the great luminaries, celebrated loudly through song, rejoicing exceedingly in merriment, and were most astonished and joyful in the divine pleasure.

And when all these were brought in and complete, last of all a great choir was led in front of [p. 99] the divine bridegroom, while the holy angels and saints of God looked on. And that choir was shining like the bridegroom himself, so as to astonish all the saints by its glory. The saints were saying to each other, “Who, then, are these who are glorious and marvelous and why

87 See Romans 2:14–16.

88 Rystenکو has τριάκοντα ἐτῶν (“thirty years”), which makes no logical sense. In (137) Niphon explains that infants perish due to the sins of their parents but in the (Last) Judgment God will reward them with crowns.

u Rystenکو has τριάκοντα.

Παραχρῆμα δὲ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς θεία τις ἐπίγνωσις παρὰ τοῦ νυμφίου καὶ ἔγνωσαν, ὅτι οὗτοι εἰσὶν οἱ λεγόμενοι μάκαρες καὶ τὸ γένος αὐτῶν, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ εἰσῆχθησαν ἔσχατον εἰς τὴν παστάδα τῆς ἁγίας μερίδος, ἵνα ἰδόντες πάντες οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος εὐαρεστήσαντες τῷ Θεῷ θαυμάσωσιν τὴν λαμπρότητα καὶ καθαρότητα αὐτῶν· καὶ γὰρ μέγα θάμβος ἐκ τῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν πορευομένης ἀστραπῆς ἐβλέπετο. Παραχρῆμα οὖν ἀναστὰς ὁ θεὸς νυμφίος τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ ὑπεδέξατο αὐτούς· καὶ ἐτίμησεν μεγάλως καὶ ἐδόξασεν κατενώπιον πάντων τῶν ἀπείρων δυνάμεων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, διότι οὐδόλως εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτοῖς μῶμος ἢ δόλος, ἢ πάλαι ἁμαρτία, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐπειράσθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου. Πάραυτα δὲ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς στολὴ φωτὸς<sup>v</sup> ὥσπερ ἱμάτιον καὶ τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔπειτα ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς θρόνος καὶ ἀγαλλίασις καὶ φάλαγξ μεγάλη μακαριότητος καὶ διαδήματα στεφάνων θεῶν καὶ λαμπρὰ σεσημειωμένα τῇ καθαρότητι τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· πάλιν δὲ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς σοφὸν τι καὶ εὐμέγεθες σφόδρα, λαμπρὸν καὶ ἀπόκρυφον, ἐπουράνιον τερπνότητα ἔχον· ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς αὐτό, ἐσκίρτησαν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν καὶ ἠγαλλιάσαντο σφόδρα καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ νυμφίῳ ἐπὶ πρόσωπον τρίτον· ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀναστῆναι αὐτοὺς ἔλαμψαν πάλιν τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν λαμπρότερον, ὥστε φλέγεσθαι τὰ ἐκείσε ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ τῆς δόξης αὐτῶν.

Μετὰ δὲ τούτους ἐναπέμειναν ἔξω τῆς θείας παστάδος τινές, οἳ οὔτε πονηρὸν οὔτε ἀγαθὸν εἰργάσαντο. Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ κατεδέξατο ὁ θεὸς νυμφίος τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔδωρῆσατο αὐτοῖς τόπον κληρονομίας καὶ φέγγος μικρόν, καὶ τοῦ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἐν ἀνέσει.

**91.** Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα· βλέπει ὁ δίκαιος Νήφων τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἰδοὺ παραγίνεται ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ νυμφίου τις θεόφωτος νύμφη ὡς ἀστραπὴ Θεοῦ καὶ φοβερὰ καὶ αἰδέσιμος· καὶ ἦν ἀγαλλίασις καὶ χαρὰ τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀγγέλοις τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῆς, ἐν δὲ τῷ βαδίζειν αὐτὴν ἀπῆστραπτον οἱ πόδες αὐτῆς ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ βλέφαρα αὐτῆς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὡς ἀστραπὴ μετ' εὐωδίας ἐπουρανίου καὶ ἀρωμάτων θεϊκῶν. Ἐξεπορεύετο εἰς δόξαν καὶ χαρὰν τῶν [p. 100] ἁγίων τοῦ Θεοῦ, περιεβέβλητο δὲ *πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον* εὐπρεπειας· ἔφερεν δὲ καὶ στέμμα θεϊκὸν ἐπὶ κάλλους κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς ἀσύγκριτον καὶ ἄφραστον, ἐξ οὗ<sup>w</sup> βολίδες θεότητος ἐξεπορεύοντο εἰς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἁγίων

were they brought in last?" Immediately a certain divine knowledge was given to them by the bridegroom and they knew that these were the so-called Blessed Ones and their kin, and because of that they were brought last to the bridal chamber of the holy lot, so that all those who were perpetually well pleasing to God might see and admire their splendor and their purity. And a great brilliance was seen from the lightning emitted by them. Then the divine bridegroom immediately stood up from his throne and received them. He honored and glorified them in front of the innumerable forces and all the saints, because no blame or deceit or old sin was found in them, nor were they tempted by the devil. Immediately a robe of light was given to them like a garment, as well as the honor and veneration of the angels of God, then [also] a throne and great joy and a great phalanx of bliss and bands of crowns, divine and bright, marked by the purity of the Holy Spirit. And again something wise and of great size was given to them, bright and concealed, having a heavenly pleasantness. And as soon as they received it, their hearts leaped and rejoiced exceedingly and they made obeisance three times to the bridegroom with their face to the ground. As soon as they stood up their faces shone even more brightly so that the things on the far side were inflamed by their light and glory.

After these things some stayed outside the divine bridal chamber, those who performed neither a good nor a bad deed. Because of this the divine bridegroom did not deign to have them enter before him, but granted them a place of inheritance and a little light, and the ability to be in comfort.

**91.** Subsequently these things happened: the righteous Niphon saw through the spirit, and behold, a divinely illuminated bride came before the bridegroom like awesome and venerable lightning of God. There was exultation and joy among the holy angels of God before her and, as she was walking, her feet flashed forth like the sun and the eyelids of her eyes were like lightning, with heavenly fragrance and divine scents. She went forth to the glory and joy of [p. 100] the saints of God, clothed in the *purple and fine linen*<sup>89</sup> of comeliness; and she wore a divine crown, incomparable and indescribable, for the beauty of her head, from which flashes of divinity were emitted to the amazement of the holy angels of

v Rystenko has στολή, φῶς. The variant reading is found in P<sup>1</sup>.

w Rystenko adds ὥσπερ.

89 Luke 16:19.

ἀγγέλων τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ εἰς θάμβος τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ· ἐφέρετο δὲ ἐπάνω τῆς ἁγίας κορυφῆς ὡς παράδοξόν τι ὑπὸ τῆς θείας χάριτος τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· ἦν δὲ φύσει ἀνερμήνευτον τὸ ἄχραντον ἐκεῖνο διάδημα.

Ἐν δὲ τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὴν θείαν παστὰδα πρὸς τὸν νυμφίον, πλήθος πολὺ νεανίδων σφόδρα καὶ παρθένων ὀπισθεν ἠκολούθει αὐτῇ μετὰ αἰνῶν καὶ ὕμνων, ἀσματικῶς ψαλλουσῶν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν πλησίον τοῦ νυμφίου, προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ τρισσῶς σὺν πάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις παρθένοις ἐκεῖναις. Τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ κάλλει ὡραῖος, ἰδὼν ἠψφράνθη σφόδρα πρὸς αὐτὴν καὶ ὡς μειδιῶν ὑπέκλινεν αὐτῇ τὴν κορυφὴν αὐτοῦ, τιμήσας αὐτὴν ὡς ἄχραντον μητέρα αὐτοῦ. Αὐτὴ δὲ συστειλάσα τὰς ἀχράντους χεῖρας αὐτῆς πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ προσελθοῦσα ἐν πολλῇ εὐλαβείᾳ καὶ χάριτι, κατεφίλησεν καθαρῶς τοὺς ἀθανάτους καὶ ἀκοιμήτους ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, ὁμοίως καὶ τὰς εὐσπλάγχχνους καὶ συμπαθεῖς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ. Ὅτε δὲ ἐτελέσθη ὁ θεῖος ἐκεῖνος ἀσπασμός, τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος πάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις ἐκεῖναις παρθένοις ἀρμολόγῳ τὰ ἀστραπόμορφα ἐκεῖνα ἀμφιάσματα ἐδώρησατο, ὁμοίως καὶ τοὺς ἀχράντους στεφάνους. Εἶτα προσελθοῦσαι καὶ αἱ νοεραὶ δυνάμεις καὶ οἱ τῷ Θεῷ εὐαρεστήσαντες ἅγιοι ἀπ' αἰῶνος, προσεκύνησαν ἅπαντες τῇ Μητρὶ τοῦ Κυρίου ἐν χαρᾷ πολλῇ καὶ ὕμνησαν καὶ ἐμακάρισαν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείναντες ἐμεγάλυναν αὐτὴν σφόδρα.

92. Ὅτε δὲ πάντα ἐτελέσθη τὰ δωρήματα τῆς εὐπρεπείας, τότε ἐξανέστη ὁ νυμφίος ἐκ τοῦ νυμφῶνος αὐτοῦ, κρατῶν ἐκ δεξιῶν τὴν ἄχραντον Μητέρα αὐτοῦ, ἐξ εὐωνύμων τε προφήτην τινὰ μέγαν καὶ θαυμαστόν. Καὶ οὕτω περιπατούντων ἀπὸ τοῦ νυμφῶνος, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν θεῖον θάλαμον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἀγαθὰ, ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν, καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίᾳ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ἃ τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν Θεὸν ἡτοιμάσται· ὅτε δὲ εἰσῆλθεν ὁ Κύριος εἰς τὸν πάμφωτον καὶ θαυμαστόν ἐκεῖνον θάλαμον, τότε συνῆλθεν αὐτῷ καὶ πᾶς ὁ χορὸς τῶν ἁγίων· ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἅγιοι τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐκεῖνα ἐσκίρτησαν ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει πολλῇ καὶ θυμηδίᾳ, καὶ ἤρξαντο καυχᾶσθαι ἐν δόξῃ χοροβατούντες ἐν τῷ κοιτῶνι ἐκεῖνῳ τῷ θαμβητικῷ. Ἐκεῖ γὰρ διεμέρισεν ὁ Κύριος τὰ αἰῶνια ἀγαθὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ἁγίοις

God and to the astonishment of his saints. The crown was carried above her holy head as something miraculous by the divine grace of the Holy Spirit. And that immaculate diadem was inexplicable in its nature.

As she proceeded to the divine bridal chamber toward the bridegroom, a great multitude of maidens and virgins followed behind her with praises and hymns, melodically singing the greatness of God. When she came near the bridegroom, she made obeisance to him thrice along with all those holy virgins. Then he himself, *the youthful in beauty*,<sup>90</sup> rejoiced greatly at seeing her and, as if smiling, bowed down his head, honoring her as her undefiled mother. After drawing her undefiled arms together toward herself and approaching him with much reverence and grace, she kissed purely his immortal and everlasting eyes, and likewise his compassionate and sympathetic hands. When that divine greeting was completed, then the Lord himself gave to all those holy virgins suitably brilliant garments and, likewise, the immaculate crowns. Then the noetic powers and these saints who were well pleasing to God drew near, and all made obeisance to the Mother of the Lord in great joy, and praised and blessed, and, extending their arms, magnified her exceedingly.<sup>91</sup>

92. When all the gifts of comeliness were accomplished, then the bridegroom came out of his bridal room, holding on the right side his immaculate mother, on his left a certain great and marvelous prophet.<sup>92</sup> And walking thus from the bridal chamber, he entered the divine [inner] room where there were the goods that *no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him*.<sup>93</sup> When the Lord entered in that light-filled and marvelous room, then the whole choir of saints came with him, too. When the saints saw these goods, they leaped with great joy and gladness of heart, and they began to boast in glory, dancing in that amazing bed-chamber. There the Lord distributed to all his saints the eternal goods, about which

90 Psalm 44 (45):3.

91 Cf. a similar meeting in *VBiun* (5.18).

92 This is certainly John the Baptist.

93 1 Corinthians 2:9. Cf. Isaiah 64:4.

αὐτοῦ, ἅπερ οὐκ [p. 101] ἡδυνήθη μοι φράσαι ἐξ αὐτῶν τι ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ Νήφων, πολλὰ γὰρ ἐβιασάμην αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶρηκέν μοι περὶ αὐτῶν τὸ οἰοεῖν· ἔλεγεν γὰρ μετὰ στεναγμοῦ τοῦτο μόνον, ὅτι “οὐ δύναμαι τῇ γλῶσσῃ μου ἀπεικάσαι ἢ ἐξομοιωσαὶ ἕν τι πρᾶγμα τὰ ἐκεῖ· ὑπῆρχον γὰρ ἔξω πάσης ἐπινοίας καὶ διακρίσεως, ἔξω πάσης ἐπιθυμήσεως καὶ θεωρίας, ἔξω πάντων τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ μὴ ὁρωμένων.”

93. Ὅτε οὖν διεμέρισεν τοῖς ἁγίοις τὰ ὄντα ἐκεῖ ὁ Κύριος, τότε προσέταξεν τὰ μεγάλα Χερουβὶμ τοῦ κυκλῶσαι ὡς τείχος πόλιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸν αἰώνιον θάλαμον, προσέταξεν δὲ καὶ τὰ Σεραφὶμ κυκλῶσαι τὰ Χερουβὶμ, πάλιν προσέταξεν τοῖς Θρόνοις κυκλῶσαι αὐτά. Ὅμοιως ἐτάγησαν καὶ οἱ Κυριότητες κυκλῶσαι τοὺς Θρόνους, ἀπὸ τούτων ὠρίσθησαν αἱ Ἀρχαὶ τοῦ κυκλῶσαι τὰς Κυριότητας, αἱ δὲ Ἐξουσίαι ταῖς Ἀρχαῖς, αἱ δὲ Δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν τὰς Ἐξουσίας ὥσπερ τείχος πόλιν· οὕτω τὰ τάγματα ἕτερον τῷ ἐτέρῳ ἐκύκλουν.

Διέστη δὲ Μιχαὴλ σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θαλάμου τῶν αἰώνων ἐν πολλῇ καταστάσει· Γαβριὴλ δὲ ἔστη ἐξ εὐωνύμων τοῦ θαλάμου σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ πολλῇ· Ῥαφαὴλ δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ ἀνατολὰς σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ ἐν σεμνότητι ἔστη· Οὐριήλ δὲ μετέβη καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ δυσμὰς τῷ θείῳ θαλάμῳ σὺν τῷ τάγματι αὐτοῦ· τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίησαν ἐκ προστάξεως τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος πάντων τῶν ἁγίων. Ἐγένοντο δὲ αἱ τέσσαρες αὗται παρεμβολαὶ μεγάλαι σφόδρα, τὰ τάγματα δὲ τῶν ἀχράντων δυνάμεων εἰστήκει καὶ αὐτὰ ἕτερον τῷ ἐτέρῳ κυκλοῦν, πάντα δὲ ἐκύκλουν τὸν θάλαμον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν πολλῇ εὐθυμίᾳ καὶ λαμπρότητι. Ὅτε οὖν ταῦτα ἐτελέσθη, τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Υἱὸς ὑπετάγη τῷ ἑαυτοῦ Πατρὶ τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐξουσίαν καὶ κυριότητα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κράτος, ὃ παρ’ αὐτοῦ εἴληφεν· αὐτὸς δὲ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν θεῖον καὶ ἀπρόσιτον θάλαμον, κληρονόμος τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα γενόμενος, μετὰ πάντων τῶν συγκληρονόμων αὐτοῦ ἁγίων.

94. Τέλος δέ, ἀδελφοί, πάντων τῶν λεγομένων ὧν εἶδεν ὁ δίκαιος μυστηρίων καὶ ἀποκάλυψιν φοβερὰν. Ἐσχάτον γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ Πατὴρ τοῦ μονογενοῦς Υἱοῦ

[p. 101] the servant of God Niphon was unable to tell me anything—for I pressed him hard, yet he did not tell me anything about them. But, sighing, he said only this, that “with my tongue I cannot represent or compare to anything the things that were there. They were beyond every thinking and distinction, beyond every desire and contemplation, beyond everything that is seen and not seen.”

93. When, therefore, the Lord had distributed those things there to the saints, then he ordered the great Cherubim to encircle the eternal chamber as a wall a city, and he ordered the Seraphim to encircle the Cherubim, and again he ordered the Thrones to encircle those. Similarly the Dominions were ordered to encircle the Thrones, and after those, the Principalities were appointed to encircle the Dominions, and the Powers of heaven [were appointed to encircle] the Dominions as a wall a city. In that way each battalion encircled another one.

Michael with his own battalion stood to the right of the eternal chamber in great stillness; Gabriel, along with his battalion, stood to the left of the chamber with much reverence; Raphael with his battalion stood to the east with reverence; Uriel proceeded to the west of the divine chamber along with his battalion. They did this by the order of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great God and Savior of all the saints. These four armies became exceedingly big, and the battalions of the immaculate powers stood and each one encircled another, and all encircled the chamber of God in much contentment and splendor. When this was accomplished, then the Son subjected himself to his own Father who had subjected everything to him and handed over to him all power, his authority, and majesty, which he had received from him.<sup>94</sup> He himself entered the divine and unapproachable chamber, becoming heir of the Father and king and high priest to the ages,<sup>95</sup> along with all his saints who shared his inheritance.

94. [This is the] end, brothers, of all that was said, the mysteries and the awe-inspiring revelation that the righteous one saw. For at the end the Father himself,

94 See 1 Corinthians 15:24–29.

95 See Psalm 109 (110):4; 1 Maccabees 14:41; Hebrews 4:14, 5:6, 6:20, 7:17.

γεννήτωρ, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀπρόσιτον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον, ἀνέτειλεν ἄφνω λάμπων ἐν ἀδύτῳ φωτὶ καθαρότητος ἐπὶ τὸν [p. 102] ἀπέραντον ἐκείνον θάλαμον τῆς εὐπρεπείας. Ἐλαμψεν δὲ ἐπάνω τῶν ἀχράντων δυνάμεων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν παράταξιν καὶ κυκλότητα αὐτῶν, ἔφανεν δὲ καὶ ἐπάνω τοῦ καθαρωτάτου θαλάμου, ὥσπερ ὁ ἥλιος φωτίζει τὸν κόσμον· οὕτω καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τότε ἔλαμψεν ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους εὐφραίνων αὐτοὺς τῇ ἀφράστῳ αὐτοῦ θεότητι· ὥσπερ δὲ σπόγγος συμπίνει ὕδωρ καὶ κατέχει, οὕτως καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι τὴν ἀφραστον θεότητα τοῦ Πατρὸς συμπίοντες καὶ συγκραθέντες ἀδιαδόχως ἐβασίλευον σὺν αὐτῷ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἔκτοτε οὖν οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς νύξ οὔτε ἡμέρα, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ φῶς καὶ τρυφή καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἡμέρα, καὶ ἀκατάληπτος ἡδονὴ καὶ τέρψις.

Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἐγένετο σιγὴ πολλή καὶ ἀνεδόθη φῶς καθαρὸν καὶ ἄκρατον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τοῦ δικαίου καὶ βλέπει καὶ ἰδοὺ τῷ πρώτῳ τάγματι ἐδόθη ἄσμα ἐν διηνεκεί καὶ ἀπαύστῳ κληρονομία ἔχον ἡδονὴν ἀσύγκριτον καὶ ἀκόρεστον· εὐθύς οὖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ φοβερώτατον τάγμα ἀπήρξατο ἐν εὐωδίᾳ πολλῇ καὶ ὠραιότητι τῆς ἀνεκφράστου δοξολογίας, ὥστε σκιρτᾶν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ ἡδονῆς τοῦ ὕμνου· ἠυφραίνοντο ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ πολλῇ εἰς δόξαν Κυρίου κινούμενοι ἐν ἀχράντῳ θαλάμῳ. Ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου οὖν τάγματος διεδόθη ὁ ἀνεκδιήγητος ὕμνος ἐκείνος ἐν δόξῃ ἐπὶ τὸ δεύτερον τάγμα τῶν Σεραφίμ, καὶ ἀπήρξατο καὶ ἐκεῖνο ἄδειν ὕμνον πολύμορφον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον. Ὡσπερ δὲ μέλι γλυκάζον πλουσίως ἀνεδύετο<sup>x</sup> ἡ δοξολογία αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς τῶν ἁγίων καὶ εὐφραίνοντο διὰ πάντων τῶν αἰσθήσεων μεγάλως. Οἱ γὰρ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἔβλεπον τὸ ἀπρόσιτον φῶς καὶ ἡ ὁσφρησις αὐτῶν ὠσφραίνετο τὴν εὐωδίαν τῆς θεότητος, αἱ ἀκοαὶ δὲ ἤκουον τοῦ θεοῦ ὕμνου τῶν ἀχράντων δυνάμεων, τὸ δὲ στόμα ἤσθιεν καὶ ἔπινεν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν, αἱ χεῖρες κατεῖχον τὰ αἰώνια ἀγαθὰ καὶ ἐλαμπρύνοντο· οἱ πόδες ἐχόρευον εἰς πλατυσμὸν ὠραιότητος τοῦ ἀχράντου θαλάμου, καὶ λοιπὸν δι' ὅλων τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἦν αὐτοῖς μεγίστη τρυφή καὶ ἀκατάληπτος ἡδονὴ καὶ ἀνεμνήνευτος χαρά.

the begetter of the only-begotten Son, the unapproachable and incomprehensible light, rose suddenly, shining in never-setting light of purity upon that [p. 102] infinite chamber of comeliness. He also shone over the undefiled powers and on all their circular deployment. And he shone above the most pure chamber, in the same way the sun brings light to the world. So, too, the Father of compassion then shone on all the saints, making them rejoice through his unutterable divinity. The same way a sponge absorbs water and retains it, thus the saints, having absorbed and become united with the unutterable divinity of the Father, reigned with him perpetually to eternity. Since then, there was for them neither night nor day, but God and the Father was for them light and joy and life and day, and incomprehensible pleasure and delight.

After this, it became very quiet and a clear and pure light was given to the eyes of the righteous one, and he saw and—behold: the first battalion was given a song in continuous and unceasing inheritance, having an incomparable and insatiable pleasure.<sup>96</sup> Then immediately the divine and awesome battalion began their inexpressible praise in much fragrance and beauty, causing the hearts of the saints to leap for joy and their pleasure in the hymn. They rejoiced with much thanksgiving, moving around the immaculate chamber to the glory of the Lord. Then the indescribable hymn was passed on gloriously from that first battalion to the second battalion, that of the Seraphim, and it also started singing a multiform and incomprehensible hymn. And the praise emerged like a richly *sweet honey*<sup>97</sup> to the ears of the saints and they rejoiced greatly through all their senses. For their eyes were seeing the unapproachable light, their noses smelled the fragrance of divinity, their ears were hearing the divine hymn of the immaculate powers, their mouths were eating and drinking the body and new blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>98</sup> and their hands were holding the eternal goods and were made brilliant. Their feet were dancing in the beautiful broad space of the undefiled chamber and with all their senses they experienced a mighty joy and incomprehensible pleasure and indescribable delight.

96 Perhaps an allusion to Revelation 14:3.

97 Ezekiel 3:3.

98 See Matthew 26:29.

x Rystenko has ἀνεδίδετο.

Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἐδόθη ὁ θεῖος ὕμνος ἐκεῖνος ἀπὸ τοῦ δευτέρου τάγματος ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον ἐπὶ συμφωνίᾳ ὠραιότητος καὶ θεωρίας, ἀπὸ τούτου διεδόθη ὁ ἄφραστος ἐκεῖνος ὕμνος, ὡς ἐπὶ τέσσαρα τάγματα κατὰ τὴν στάσιν αὐτῶν· ὁμοίως οὖν ὁ ἀπόρρητος ἐκεῖνος ὕμνος διεδίδετο ἀπὸ τάγμα εἰς τάγμα κατὰ τὴν παράστασιν αὐτῶν, ἡδονὴν καὶ τέρψιν ἐμποιῶν ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων καρδίαις· [p. 103] ἦν δὲ ἡδὺ τὸ μέλος αὐτῶν λίαν καὶ ἀπόκρυφον· φρικτὸν γὰρ ἦν τοῦτο ὅτι οὐκ ἦν εἰς ὕμνος τῶν ἀπάντων ταγμάτων ὁ ἀδόσιμος, ἀλλὰ πολυποικιλία ἦν ἄρρητος καὶ ξένη ἢ ὥδῃ αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναπεμπομένη ἐκ τοῦ ἄσματος αὐτῶν· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἄρμὸς ἄρμῳ, ἢ μέλος μέλει, οὕτως αἰσίως συνήρμοζον αἱ δοξολογίαι αὐτῶν, καὶ ὡς Θεῷ αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνο ἀναπέμποντες καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐμποιοῦντες θυμηδίαν ἀπόρρητον.

“Ὅτε δὲ οὗτοι πάντες ἐν πολλῇ ἀνέσει καὶ καταστάσει τὸν ὕμνον ἑαυτῶν καθαρῶς ἐξετέλεσαν, τότε ἀπήρξαντο καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι τῆς τρισαγίου δοξολογίας· Μιχαὴλ μὲν ἔλεγεν, καὶ ἀντιφωνοῦντα εἶχεν Γαβριήλ· ὁμοίως πάλιν Ραφαὴλ ἔφασκεν καὶ Οὐριήλ ἀντεφώνει αὐτῷ· καὶ ἦν ἰδεῖν εἰς τούτους ξένον καὶ παράδοξον ἐκτέλεσμα, διεξήχουν γὰρ οἱ τέσσαρες προστάται ὡς φοβεροὶ στύλοι ἐκ τῆς ἀμετρήτου τάξεως αὐτῶν καὶ ὥσπερ συνανέκειντο ἕτερος τῷ ἑτέρῳ σὺν πολλῇ εὐλαβείᾳ ἐπαναπαυόμενοι ἐν ἀλλήλοις, ἡδὺς ἦν ὁ ὕμνος αὐτῶν καὶ ἰσχυρὸς σφόδρα. Μετὰ ταῦτα οὖν ἤρξαντο καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες ἔνδον τοῦ θεοῦ θαλάμου ἐκ τῆς ἀπείρου χαρᾶς τε καὶ τρυφῆς ἐκείνης γαυρούμενοι ψάλλειν καὶ ὕμνεῖν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ λοιπὸν ἦν ἔσω ὕμνος καὶ ἔξωθεν ὕμνος καὶ πανταχοῦ ἄσματα φρικτὰ ἐμπυρίζοντα τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἁγίων τῇ ἀχράντῳ καὶ μακαρίᾳ ἡδονῇ. Οὕτως οὖν ἀνεπέμποντο τὰ ἀκατάπαυστα ἐκεῖνα ἄσματα, πάντα νοῦν ὑπερβαίνοντα εἰς ἀτελευτήτους αἰῶνας.

95. “Ὅτε δὲ ταῦτα πάντα ἐθεάσατο ὁ μακάριος Νήφων, καὶ ἦν ἐν ἐκστάσει πολλῇ καὶ θεωρίᾳ, ἐρρέθη φωνὴ γνώσεως Θεοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσα: “Νήφων, Νήφων, ὡς καλὴ σου ἡ θεωρία καὶ ἡ προφητικὴ προόρασις. Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα ὅσα ἤκουσας καὶ ἐώρακας ἐν πάσῃ τῇ σοφίᾳ σου, ταῦτα γραφῇ σημείωσον κατὰ τῇ μακαριοτάτῃ ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ γὰρ οὕτως μέλλω θαυμαστώως ἐπιτελέσαι πάντα τὰ ἔργα μου εἰς πάντα τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα. Σοὶ οὖν ὡς μύστην τε καὶ φίλον μου καὶ υἱὸν ἀγαπητόν, καὶ ὡς κληρονόμον τῆς βασιλείας μου ταῦτα ἐφάνερῶσα, ἃ τινι ἑτέρῳ οὐκ ἔδειξα, ἵνα

After this, that divine hymn was given in harmonious beauty and contemplation from the second battalion to the third, and from there the unutterable hymn spread to the four battalions according to their position. Similarly, the ineffable hymn was handed over from battalion to battalion according to their position, producing in the hearts of the saints pleasure and joy [p. 103]. And their melody was very sweet and secret. And this was shocking, that all the battalions were not singing one hymn, but that the variety was inexpressible, and the sound that was sent up from their song was foreign. Their praises fit tightly together as a joint [fits] a joint, or a limb [fits] a limb, sending it [=the song] up to God himself and causing the saints ineffable rejoicing.

When they had all finished the hymn in great comfort and peace, the [arch]angels started their thrice-holy praise. Michael was singing, and he had Gabriel respond antiphonally. Similarly Raphael spoke, and Uriel responded antiphonally to him. And one could see in them a strange and incredible rendition [of the hymn], because the four protectors stood out from their innumerable order [of angels] like awesome pillars, and as if they reclined together, one on the other, they reposed with great piety on each other, and their hymn was sweet and very powerful. After this, all the saints inside the divine chamber, reveling in infinite joy and delight, also started to sing and praise the glories of God. Thus there was praise inside and praise outside, and everywhere awesome songs, setting aglow the hearts of saints with the immaculate and blessed pleasure. In that way these incessant songs, which transcend the mind, were sent forth to unending ages.

95. After the blessed Niphon had seen all these things and was in a state of much ecstasy and contemplation, the voice of the knowledge of God spoke to him saying, “Niphon, Niphon, how fine are your contemplation and prophetic foresight! All these things that you have heard and seen in your entire wisdom—record them in writing<sup>99</sup> according to the most blessed truth, because it is in this way that I will miraculously perform all my works to everything visible and invisible. To you, as an initiate into the mysteries and as my friend and beloved son, and as an heir to my kingdom I have revealed these

99 See Revelation 1:11, 19.

μάθης πόση φιλία ἔγκειται ἀναμεταξὺ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ σοῦ. Πληροφόρηθητι οὖν ἐκ τῆς γνώσεως τῶν μυστηρίων τῶν φρικτῶν τούτων, ὧν ἐν πάσῃ ἀληθείᾳ ἐν ἐκστάσει ἐγένου, ὡς ἐσομένων καὶ οὕτως διοικηθῆναι μελλόντων, τὴν πολλὴν φιλανθρωπίαν ἣν ἔχω ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει, τῇ ἐν πολλῇ ταπεινώσει θεραπευοῦσῃ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τὴν ἐμὴν καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡδέως βλέπω ἐπὶ τὸν πρᾶον καὶ ἡσυχον καὶ [p. 104] τρέμοντά μου τοὺς λόγους.” Ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὁ Κύριος ἀπέλυσεν τῆς θεωρίας τῆς φοβερᾶς ἐκείνης.

things, which I have not shown to anybody else, so that you might know how much friendship lies between you and me. Then from the knowledge of these awesome mysteries, by which, in all truth, you came into a state of ecstasy, as they will come to pass and will be administered in this way, be fully assured of my great benevolence toward both you and the entirety of human nature, which in great humility serves my authority and kingdom. For I look with pleasure upon the one who is meek and cautious and [p. 104] who fears my words.” Having said these words, the Lord released [Niphon] from this awesome vision.

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